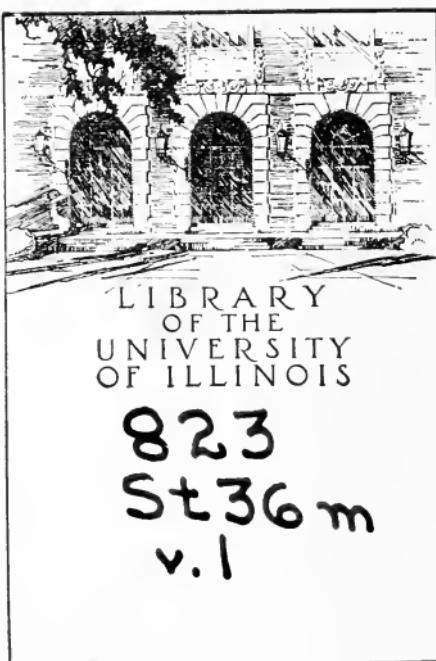
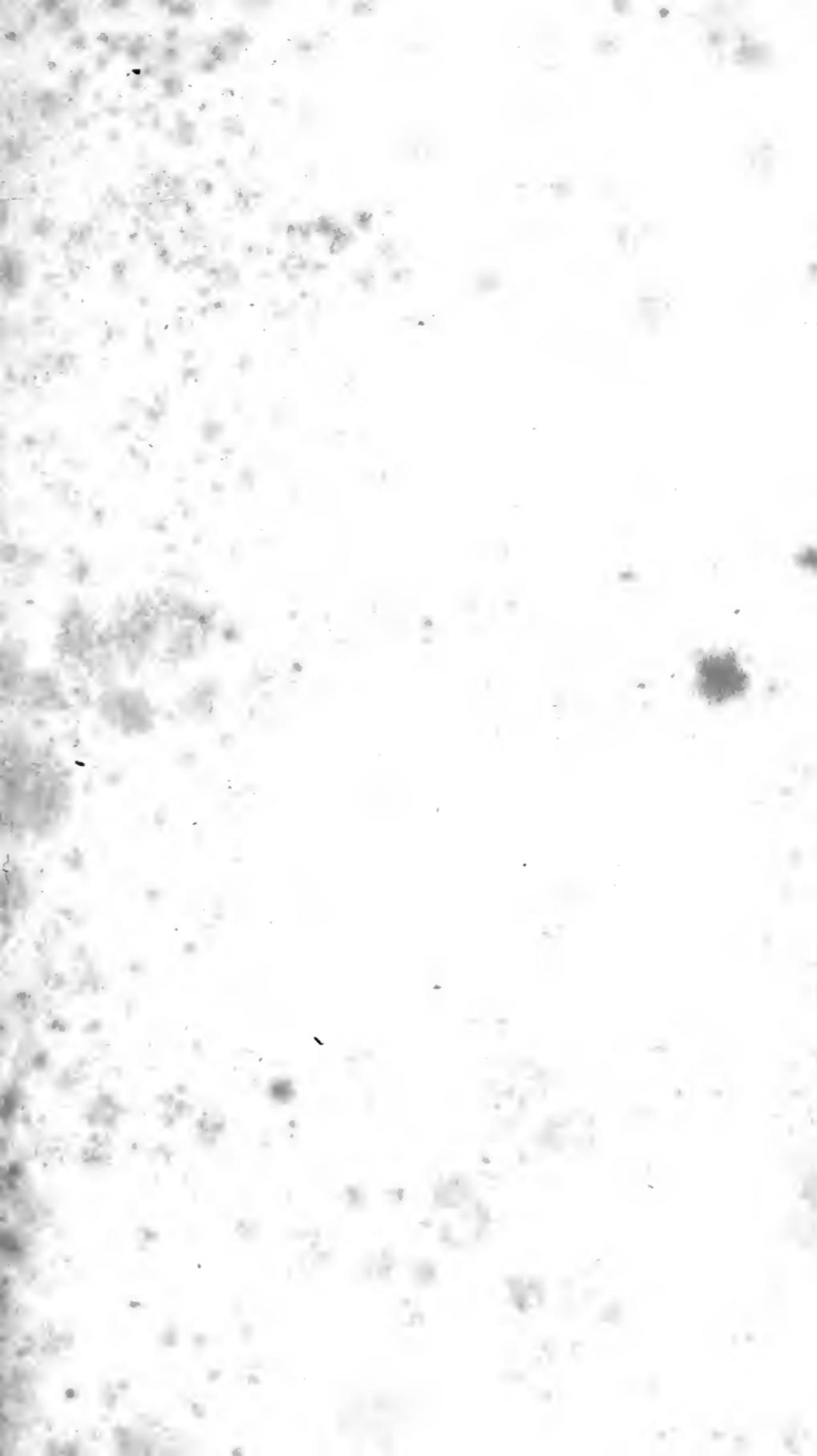


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THE
MANUSCRIPTS OF ERDÉLY.

VOL. I.

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THE
MANUSCRIPTS OF ERDÉLY.

A Romance.

BY

GEORGE STEPHENS.

“A scholar’s fancy,
A quab, ’tis nothing else—a very quab.”
FORD.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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CHARACTERS

IN

THE MANUSCRIPTS OF ERDELY.

SOLYMAN THE MAGNIFICENT.

CARDINAL MARTINUZZI, Regent of Hungary.

PETER PERENY.

VALENTINIAN TIBASCUS a lover of his country.

VALENTI
BALASSI

DALASSI.
NADASTIS

NADASTI
MAYLAT

MATEA
MIRCE,

BATHORI, the friend of Maximilian Pereny.

MAXIMILIAN PERENY, son of Peter, Count Pereny, and Nephew of Martinuzzi.

PETER THE BLOODY, Prince of Moldavia.

PETER THE BLOODY, Prince of
Iwan Richter of Wallachia

ABU QASIM: Amir and Envoy from Turkey.

Mr. NEMRIT OF BUDAPEST, Austrian Ambassador.

CASTALDO, Marquis of Piadena; Austrian Ambassador.

ANTOINE FERRARO, his S.

COUNT RODNA, an Exile.

SIGISMUND, his reputed Grandson, and

LUKE SWARTZ, Sigismund's Keeper.

FATHER DOMINICK, Confessor to Martinuzzi

SCIPIO, Black Fam

HUBERT VICCHY.

VERONICA, his Daughter.
COUNT RAGOTZY, alias **ALARIC POLGAR**, Brigand and Leader of

Gipsies.

ISABELLA, Queen Dowager of Hungary.

CZERINA, her Daughter, in Love with Ferraro.

SCENE Transylvania.—TIME middle of the 16th Century.

THE
MANUSCRIPTS OF ERDELY.

THE
MANUSCRIPTS OF ERDÉLY.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

'Η της βουλης ισχυς ψυχη πολεως εστιν.

Libanius; Orat. Parentalis, c. lxxi. p. 96.

It is doubtful what was the original rank in life, and what the parentage of the celebrated individual, who will stand forward a principal agent in the following narrative.

The birth of George Martinuzzi occurred, it is supposed, in Croatia,* somewhere about the latter part of the fifteenth century, and proved the advent of as fatal calamities to his adopted country, as ever overwhelmed the liberties of a gallant people. It is true that the consequences of the fall of Presburg had been quickly retrieved by a peace with the Archduke Ferdinand, and that any imaginary disgrace might be considered as obliterated in the brilliant affair, which happened shortly

* Martinusius ipse in literis ad Wrantium scriptis diserte ait se e Croatia ortum. Apud Pray. Annal. P. v. page 271.

after, of two thousand cattle-keepers putting to rout the whole infidel force in the gorge of the Red Tower.* But Rhodes, which had long held the Ottoman emperor at bay, having at length submitted to his arms,† his mind had leisure to revert to his ancient and fascinated enemy. He fixed his basiliskan eye on the Magyar nation, as on a prey. For awhile he seemed to hesitate ; but a slight affront, which, in an evil hour, his representative received at the court of Lewis,‡ though promptly avenged by the massacre of 20,000 prisoners, served as an apology and signal for the memorable irruption of 1526. Ere that event, however ominous the clouds which frequently darkened the eastern hemisphere of Europe, they invariably gathered without bursting. Hungary, during this temporary interval of breathing-time, seems to have been lulled into a false and fatal supineness, and to have taken no rational measures of defence, in the event of a renewed invasion. Solyman, who, according to Istuanfius, was looked upon at this period as another Sardanapalus, lingered in his capital, occupied in consolidating his conquests and resources, and recruiting the strength of his vast empire, as Jove's bird might retire to his impregnable aërie, and new plume his wing, for a flight more soaring than the last.

At length, the blow, so long suspended, fell with redoubled weight. In the summer of the year already adverted to, 250,000 Ottomans turned the flank of Transylvania, and rushed like a torrent down upon the sandy *steppes* of Lower Hungary. The bulwark of Christendom§ had already been taken by assault. To oppose the inroad

* Istuanf. lib. iii.

† Lud. Tuber. Comm. lib. xi. and Nic. Olah. Chron, ad an. 1521.

‡ Comment. a Bar. ab Herberstein.

§ Belgrade,—for long the bulwark of Christendom, as, for centuries before, of the Byzantine empire. Bonfinius writes, that Charlemagne stopt short his vague and nominal conquests at Belgrade, lest he should appear to insult the frontiers of the eastern empire ; Ne orientalis imperii fines lædere videretur. Ant. Bonfn. Decad. 1. Lib. ix.

of this destroying host, Lewis took the field in person; and ambitious to distinguish his reign by a splendid achievement, he fatally resolved to stand the shock at the head of very inferior forces. “Green in his estate,”* the royal stripling was accustomed to defer, as a matter of course, to the advice of priestly counsellors. It was an hereditary failing. Not long before, his predecessor, Ladislas, had yielded to the fanaticism of the Archbishop of Strigonie, whilst that prelate inflamed the minds of the deluded peasantry to a degree of religious enthusiasm, which, although in the first instance directed against the Turks, came to wreak itself indiscriminately on Mahometan and Christian.† This phrenetic fire was with difficulty extinguished by a sanguinary victory, gained over the wretched crusaders at Temeswar, by John of Zapola, hereditary waivode of Transylvania.‡ Unadmonished by his father’s error, Lewis, as superstitious as he was brave, had blindly committed his conduct to the guidance of ecclesiastics. Several prelates received military appointments,§ and a friar of the order of St. Francis precipitated the fate of Hungary. Paul Tomorry, Archbishop of Colocza, took the lead of the palatine Etienne Bathori,|| to whose office of customary right the baton of generalissimo belonged,¶ and virtu-

* Bacon.

† Nic. Olah. Chron. Istuanf. lib. v., and Hist. Chron. Pannoniæ, auth. Theod. de Bry, p. 21.

‡ Istuanf. lib. v. Hist. de l’Emp. Ott. Chron. and Hist. Univers. lib. v., p. 355.

§ For the origin of the “Milites Ecclesiastici” in Hungary, consult Ladisl. Posthum. Regis, Decret. art. 3. It was issued A. D. 1454.

|| Hist. de Tro. de Hong, par F. de Genille., and Istuanf. l. viii., and Hist. Universelle par Gasp. Peucer, lib. vii. p. 391.

¶ We know not if all history can furnish another example of a subject being possessed of such privileges, or rather prerogatives, as were attached to the rank of palatine of Hungary. The election of some one of his magnates to that high office, (for life, see Pet. de Reva, Cent. vi.), was obligatory upon the king. His was the first voice in the diet; his the right to the regency during the minority of the crown. In war he

ally commanded at the battle of Mohacs, fought on the 29th of August, 1526.* On the night preceding this *dies iræ*, King Lewis was admonished by a terrible phantom, ("*Un fantome hideux, decharné, les yeux ardens, les jambes torses*") not to quit his advantageous position, but to await the junction of John of Zapola, who was advancing by rapid marches from Transsylvania, with a considerable reinforcement. The brave monarch, however, influenced by the counsel of Tomorry, and eager to strike a brilliant and decided blow, before the diligence of the waivode could pretend to share the honour and participate in the triumph, disdained the salutary and supernatural warning. In the ardour and inexperience of youth, and actuated by the pride of prowess, and the impatience of inaction, he felt persuaded that every obstacle must yield to the invincible virtue of the sword and the cross. His own life, and those of 22,000 men, 7 bishops, 28 magnates, and 500 nobles, paid the forfeit of his rash subserviency to the archbishop, who, if he was the author, was also the victim of the public calamity. The butchery did not cease for many following days. Buda was delivered up to pillage; the entire country, from the Drave to the Raab, was devastated; and 200,000 Christians were computed to have been either slaughtered, or borne away to slavery.† Fear and trembling reigned throughout the land.

was general-in-chief; in civil broils the authorised mediator between king and people. If, from any cause, the crown was incapacitated to rule, or happened to be absent, the palatine, *ex officio dignitate*, discharged all the royal functions. See Tripartit. Opus decret. constitut. Artic. Regum, incl. Reg. Hung., vol. ii. p. 141—183. Besides the revenues from the saltpits, he received the rents of the two isles on the coast of Dalmatia, afterwards possessed by the Venetians.

* Some authorities say October.

† For the particulars of the battle of Mohacs, see Istuanfius, Peucer, F. de Genille, Cantimir, P. de Reva, c. vi. The details in L'Histoire des Revolutions de Hongrie, are the most copious; they are chiefly extracted from Broderith, "qui y était présent."

Hungarian mothers, fancying the howl of the wolf-dog in the night portended the coming of the Turk, were known, in their distraction, “to pluck their nipple from the boneless gums of the babe that milked them,” and bury him alive, lest his shrill cries might betray their lurking place. It appears manifestly from every account, that the whole of Hungary lay prostrate at the foot of the victor. Her claims and liberties—her constitution and prosperity—were alike trodden down; and from that day to the present, she might have been swallowed up in the Ottoman empire, had Solyman not found himself shortly constrained, by the necessity of his affairs, to withdraw his forces into Asia, in order to crush the rebellion of the Caramanian princes.

These historical occurrences, which we have necessarily glanced over more cursorily in this preliminary chapter than we might have done were ours a loftier avocation engrossed the attention of all men, and account, in a great measure, for the obscurity which involves the family and earlier years of Martinuzzi. What was overlooked amidst incidents more immediately interesting, could hardly be retraced years subsequently, especially since Martinuzzi, after his destinies had called him to so high an elevation, invariably eschewed any allusion to his origin. We have only, therefore, to choose between the contradictions of his chroniclers. The biography of M. Bechet, canon of Usez,* (though chiefly compiled from Thuanus and Istuanfius), seems to us least obnoxious to cavil, and we shall consequently take leave to adhere, in a great measure, to his authority, in the concise preliminary account of Martinuzzi, which we think requisite to lay before our readers.

The personage, the interesting scene of whose fortunes we have undertaken to exhibit, was consigned, by the

* Histoire du Ministère du C. Martinusius dédiée à S. A. S. Monseigneur le Prince Ragotski, Prince Souverain de Transylvanie. A Paris 1715.

bishop Sigismund of Fünfkirchen, to the protection of J. Corvinus, natural son of King Mathias; and his childhood was spent in the castle of Hunniade, in Transylvania. Afterwards, together with his sister, he came to reside under the roof of the Grafne, or Countess Scepas, mother of John of Zapola. The children were recommended to her service by the same prelate of Fünfkirchen, who introduced them as the offspring of one Gregory Uthysenitsch, whom he represented to be the descendant of an illustrious family, plunged by the civil calamities of the period in ruin. Further explanation the bishop declined affording, and it seems to have been the impression of the countess, that in fostering the little George Martinuzzi, she was solacing the paternal solicitude of her right reverend friend.

Be that as it may, George soon found himself at home; his childish sports and those of his sister, Rose, were shared by the youthful count, and the little Beatrice de Zapola. Indeed, over the former (although several years his senior) our foundling presently gained such an ascendant, as only ceased long afterwards with the life of that personage. When George Martinuzzi had attained the age of manhood, for some unexplained cause, he quitted the residence of the young waivode, of Transylvania, and retired to the monastery of the order of St. Paul the hermit, at Ladium, near Erlau. Here, having struggled into the knowledge of classical literature and science, amid no ordinary impediments, he betook himself to the ecclesiastical life. Bishop Sigismund, of Fünfkirchen, his early benefactor, was now no more. On the accession of John of Zapola, after the battle of Mohacs, Martinuzzi declined accepting his pressing invitation to come to Buda, but when, in the ensuing year, the troubles of the kingdom were renewed, and the invasion of the Archduke Ferdinand drove his beloved sovereign into exile, the young priest deemed it his duty to leave the sanctuary of the cloister, and followed his friend to Po-

land, to proffer him his services. He found the king at the house of Jerome Lascus,* afterwards Palatine of Seradia, a man, to use the words of the historian, “for his honourable descent and learned virtue of great fame and reputation amongst the Polonians.”† Martinuzzi was welcomed with open arms by the expelled monarch; the more so, that he brought word that the regalia of St. Stephen was yet at Vissegrade, and had not hitherto fallen into the hands of his competitor.

The reader should understand that this was a relic of antiquity, held in the most superstitious regard by every true Hungarian, from its being devoutly believed to have been fabricated by angels. It was the sacred gift of pope Benedict the Fifth,‡ to Stephen the Holy, the first Christian possessed of the regal dignity in Hungary, from which era it had been preserved with reverential awe, as a deposit of inestimable worth. The regal rights and privileges were reputed to be inseparable from its possession. In it is centered, remarks one historian,§ “omnis religio, salus, decusque Hungarorum.—Quis precor,” he asks elsewhere, “ambigere ausit sacram coronam in tutelâ præpotentis Dei esse?” without its assistance there could be no legitimate claim preferred to the sovereignty. “Quand bien même vous verriez la couronne de St. Etienne sur la tête d'un Bœuf vous n'en devriez pas moins le reconnoître pour roi,” was the celebrated saying of an Hungarian.||

* See Hieron. Lasky, Hist. Arc. leg. ad Solim. in adparatu ad Hist. Hung. Dec. 1. Monum. 1.

† Vir inter Sarmatas ab illustri nobilitate eruditæque virtutis nomine clarissimus.

‡ For this, Bonfinius, Dec. 11, lib. 1. auctor est. The crown was, however, the gift of Silvester II.

§ Petr. de Reva, de Mon. & S. Cor. reg. Hung. lib. 1.—This author indulges, throughout his centuries, in repeated hyperbolical admiration of the subject of his history, (the Monarchical and Sacred Crown of Hungary), in which the enclosures of the Latin Syntax are not unfrequently over-leaped.

|| Nicolas de Gara, Palatine under the reign of Mary I.

The joy of the king at learning that the sacred regalia had escaped the spoiler, may therefore easily be conceived. Martinuzzi, in company with Lascus, was privately despatched as John's ambassador to Constantinople.

The interest of Solyman, and his hatred of the empire, must have ably seconded, or even prevented the eloquence of the holy father. It is certain, that, whether directly, or through the medium of the Basha, he so forcibly impressed upon the mind of the sultan, the impolicy of permitting the archduke to press upon his dominions by the acquisition of the Roman Dacia, that Solyman himself proposed to crown John of Zapola, in Buda, if he would consent to hold his sceptre as a fief of the Porte. It was somewhat prior to this, that Ferdinand, in right of his consort, and what was called at the time the family compact, advanced his claim to the Hungarian crown; and having, on the evacuation of the Turks, entered the country with an imperial army, he already was possessed of the greater part of the kingdom. Martinuzzi had scarcely taken his leave, when the ambassadors of Ferdinand are ushered into the presence of the Ottoman emperor. They rashly require of him the cession of the places he had captured from king Lewis, as the price of the friendship of the archduke. A haughty and bitter smile curled the lip of Solyman for a moment. Then, rising indignantly, he spake: memorable was his reply. "Say to him who sent you," exclaimed the fierce sultan, "that you have beheld my armies on the point of re-entering Hungary—the keys of all my fortresses in that kingdom are here in my hands, and I shall suspend them round my neck;*" thus accoutréed, I hie me in the first place to the plain of Mohacs:† there bid your master await me if he have the courage, and let arms again decide, on that plain, whether this territory be his right, or that of king John, my feu-

* "Omnium clades ad collum meum appendam."

† "Mohacs, fatalem gentis Hungariæ locum."—Petrus de Reva.

datory. Should I lie vanquished, he will find me amongst the slain; when, by severing my head from off my shoulders, the keys of Hungary will be in his grasp—but mark me, sir, if we do not meet in Mohacs, tell your master, I march on to Buda; if I light not on him in that capital, 'tis in Vienna I shall seek him.”* It is well known how dreadfully Solyman kept this promise. In the ensuing month, like an unhooded hawk, he flew at his accustomed quarry, and re-seated John of Zapola in triumph on the throne of Hungary.

Meantime, the sister of Martinuzzi had been united to the *graf*, or count, Peter Pereny, and within a twelve-month afterwards gave birth to a male infant (Maximilian) whose being was dearly purchased by the death of his maternal parent. Peter Pereny, who came to play so conspicuous a part on the troubled stage of Hungary, was descended of an illustrious house.

At the time that the throne became vacant, in consequence of King Lewis having bit the dust, Pereny was in possession of Vissegrade, and so, although only one of the “*Duumviri*,” held at his disposal the regal ornaments of the kingdom,† which, by the prescription of centuries, were deposited in the castle that overlooks that city.†

This nobleman was endowed with many of the qualities which command respect. His magnificence bordered on profusion; his courage was unacquainted with fear, and his mind disdained subordination; but he appears to have been governed throughout his life, chiefly by that wavering impulse, which is apt to become the sole rudder of minds, not nicely balanced by substantial principle. There was, however, something grand in the uncompromising hauteur with which he invariably kept him-

* Istuanfius, l. x. p. 152; and Joann. Zermagh, *Rerum gestarum inter Ferd. & Joann. Comment.* lib. 1. § viii; and Bethlen, lib. 7. p. p. 43; and Jovii *Histor. libro xxviii. p. 279.*

† Peter de Reva.

self aloof from the herd of imperial courtiers and time-servers, in aid of whose monarch, fortune, rank, country, and reputation had been alike sacrificed. The noble exile stood, like Hannibal, at the court of Antiochus, “amongst them, but not of them,”—his body seemed to swell beyond the fetters of their conventional alliance. Pereny knew not how to succumb even to conquer. What could be a finer spectacle than the generosity and magnificence displayed by the Hungarian noble, in the days of his glory ; ere yet his character had been tarnished, and his fortune at once assailed by adversity, and broken in upon by ingratitude and disappointment ?—the hundred tables daily groaning beneath that charitable munificence, which catered hospitality to a whole banat, and where the choicest chivalry in the land were proud to partake of his entertainments :—his boast of never putting foot in stirrups without a hundred high-mettled coursers being led before him :—the housings of these were of rich cloth embroidered with gold, and the bridles, head-pieces, and all the harnessing were of corresponding magnificence :—a like number, no less richly caparisoned, awaited him at his door :—the vast number of knights admitted into his train, which gave his life-guard the aspect of royal brilliancy :*—the 12,000 vassals and retainers, all admirably mounted and equipped, who, more devoted to the will of their chief, than to the sovereign, or to the laws, obeyed his mandate with unhesitating promptitude. Eloquent, active, and enterprising, the Hungarian noble, formidable alike from those personal accomplishments, and eminent for the extent of his feudal territories, and the offices and jurisdictions with which he was invested, might have wrought the salvation of his native land ; but as his means were

* The brilliancy of the cortege of the Hungarian magnate, has been deemed worthy of historical notice. See Comment. Rer. Mosc. a Baro ab Herberstein. p. 208, 209. Also Lud. Tuber. Comm. de Temp. su. lib. xi. s. 2.

directed, they only tended to aggravate her present state of embroilment, and accelerate her ultimate day of thraldom ; his many distinguished virtues were fluctuating and unstable, and proved on that account pernicious to his country, and even ruinous to himself. Pereny admitted, within the still chambers of his mind, a single but cankering vice, and also his otherwise brilliant qualities were attended with that defect we have just mentioned. Like unto Reuben, despite "the excellency of dignity and the excellency of power," he was "unstable as water and might not excel." The vice was envy. Like Haman, whose advancement "availed him nothing, so long as he saw Mordecai the Jew, sitting at the king's gate," the distorted vision, the *cæca invidia* of Pereny, alloyed whatever distinctions and honours were bestowed on him. He could ill brook his station of comparative inferiority, and was still dissatisfied, so long as he saw his brother-in-law surpass him in authority and influence with the king. But let us not in this early stage of our story yield to gloomy forebodings. Querela ab initio absint.* On the election of John Zapola to the throne, the Count Pereny, disregarding equally the asserted right of Ferdinand, and the rival claim preferred by the palatine Bathori, then absent in Bohemia, came from Vissigrade to Alba Regalis, with the regal ensigns, to assist at the coronation of the waivode. The ceremony was solemnly performed at the hands of the bishops of Strigonié † and Vacia, and a few days afterwards king John acknowledged the signal service of Pereny, by appointing him to be one of the governors of the province of Transylvania. Whether this dignity, however high, was inadequate to the cravings of an unprincipled ambition, or whether, even thus early, he had grown jealous of the

* Livy.

† It was the claim and privilege of the archbishop of this see, to crown the kings of Hungary.

credit acquired by Martinuzzi, on finding it eclipse his own, cannot now be ascertained; nor indeed, in the chronicles of the time, do we find any motive alleged for the strange tergiversation of Pereny. The fact we are about to relate is at least certain, * the particular inducement must for ever remain among the impenetrabilia of a hasty and uncertain character. † On the subsequent invasion of Hungary by the Archduke Ferdinand, and the flight of the king that followed his discomfiture at Tocay, Pereny, who had illegally retained possession of the diadem,‡ presented the sacred treasure to the Austrian, as he had lately done to John of Zapola. The coronation of Ferdinand, and Ann his wife, sister of the unfortunate Lewis, was celebrated by the same prelate of Strigonie § with great pomp at Alba Regalis. The inconstancy of Pereny did not end here. After the restoration of Zapola, the graf renewed his fealty where he had first pledged it, and presently contrived to come to terms and reconcile himself to John. He was reinstated in his title and office of waivode || of Transylvania, and soon found himself so well established in the king's favour, as, being at this time a widower, openly to make his addresses to the princess Beatrice. ¶ The point of time at which we are now arrived, brings us to the convention, which ended in the fatal accord between the Hungarian monarch and the Archduke, (newly elected king of Bohemia.) Herein it was capitulated, that John of Zapola should retain Hungary during the remainder of his lifetime, but that,

* See Perez Papai in Rud. rediv. ad ann. 1526; and Lampe in Histor. Eccles. Reform. p. 67.

† Perenus Vir incertæ fidei. Istuanfus.

‡ Perenus qui (diadema) contra legem sanctam apud se detineret. — Petrus de Reva, cent. vi.

§ Op. Tripart. p. 311.

|| Waivode signifies præfector militiæ or general of the army. Rycaut.

¶ Ipse vero Pereny, ab eo tempore, Johanni usque ad ejus obitum, fidem, et obedientiam utcunque servabit. Joan Zermagh. Rer. gest. inter Ferd. & Joann. lib. ii. s. 11.

on his demise, that kingdom should be thenceforward annexed to Austria. In this expedient for closing the gates of anarchy, which is said to have been suggested to both parties, by their common mediator and friend, Jerome Lascus, the historian, was deposited the fruitful seeds of future wars and contentions. Viewed in whatever light, John was incompetent, of his own will, to conclude and subscribe to any such compromise. The constitution of the realm was an elective monarchy: and further, John held his crown as a fief of the Porte; but in this unprincipled cession of the kingdom, neither Solyman, on the one part, nor the magnates of the state, assembled in national diet, on the other, had been consulted. At the veto of either, the compact was clearly void.* Ferdinand, however, may have reflected, that it would be only a useless expenditure of blood and treasure, any longer to contest the crown of Saint Stephen with the present competitor; whilst John of Zapaia's assent to the reversion of the kingdom, at all events, opened a loop-hole for the chances of the future. Whether either of the royal negotiators was ever sincere in the engagements he entered into, is uncertain; but not long after the aforesaid accommodation, at the repeated instances of his nobility, John was induced, notwithstanding his advanced years, to contract a matrimonial alliance with his cousin Isabella, the daughter of Sigismund the First, king of Poland. The loveliness of his bride might have made the match acceptable to the monarch, while the desire of thwarting the views of the princes of the House of Austria, so evidently on the watch for the aggrandizement of their family,

* Ce ne fut pas sans indignation que les Hongrois virent faire une transaction de cette nature, sans la participation des états; comme si l'un ou l'autre avoit eu la propriété du royaume ou qu'il eut été un patrimoine dont ils eussent eu la libre et entière disposition.—Hist. des Révolutions de Hongrie. Tom. 1. lib. 11. p. 142.

recommended the union to his haughty and independent magnates.* Thus, in due course of time, another powerful obstacle between the archduke and the attainment of his ambitious projects, made its appearance, in the person of the Infant Czerina, who, we take occasion to advertise our readers, has done us the honour of assuming the part of heroine in the eventful tale, which, according to our humble ability, we shall presently proceed to tell. Shortly after the birth of Czerina, the graf, Pereny, was betrothed to the princess Beatrice; but the espousals had not been celebrated when the death of her royal brother intervened. John for some time had been in a declining state of health, notwithstanding which, he followed in his chariot the large army he had despatched to Hermannstadt, to put down the rebel Transylvanian chieftains, Maylat and Balassi. In the course of that campaign, the father of our heroine expired, and left his kingdom as a sort of waif, free spoil to the earliest in the field, or more like the *præda* of a chancery suit, which is (or was) wont to be parcelled and preyed upon, *sine die*, by any party, but the one most concerned. Ferdinand immediately marched an army into Hungary, and invested Buda. Martinuzzi, the counsellor of John in the most momentous affairs of government, had long before that monarch's demise been installed in the see of Waradin, and nominated to the waivodeship of Transylvania, besides having been created grand treasurer. He now found himself appointed, by the will of his royal patron, joint regent with the Queen-dowager Isabella, during the minority of the youthful queen, who was bequeathed to his especial guardianship, and recommended to his care.† Fortunately for the nation, this pre-eminent in dignity

* J. Zermagh, Rer. gest. inter Ferd. & Joann. lib. ii. s. xi. Comment.
Pet. de Reva, cent. vi. p. 725.

* Histoire du Card. Martinusius, lib. ii. p. 115.

could not have been conferred more deservedly, nor such plenitude of power have been intrusted into abler hands.

Count Pereny, perhaps mortified at his brother-in-law's new accumulation of honour, again revolted, with other Hungarian nobles, to the side of Ferdinand, who was well pleased to take advantage of those civil discords, on which he rested his present influence, and founded his hopes of future dominion. Pereny was present at the investment of Buda, which was first relieved by a victory, obtained by Martinuzzi over the Austrian forces, in which the general-in-chief (Roccandolph,) was mortally wounded, and the siege was afterwards wholly raised, by the advance of Solyman himself at the head of immense forces. Pereny again took shelter in the Austrian dominions, where it was reported that Ferdinand purposed rewarding services, which the fugitive had the inclination, but not the power to perform, by giving him in marriage his sister, the Queen Mary, relict of the unfortunate Lewis. If ever such alliance was seriously intended by the parties most interested, they were not allowed to remain long in its contemplation; for, after awhile, we find the unhappy exile thrown into the state prison of Vienna, on some charge of treasonable practices, the nature of which does not clearly appear.

The national party, having escaped the more imminent danger of overthrow from their avowed enemy, the archduke, was now to be obnoxious to the hardly less fatal offices of their Ottoman allies. Solyman soon dictated the price, at which he rated his friendship and protection. Under pretence of guarding against any subsequent invasion of Hungary by the Imperialists, he engarrisoned with his forces most of the fortresses and towns of that kingdom; relegating the child of Zapola to the province of Transylvania, and some of the bordering Banats, her hereditary inheritance, and the only fragments of the Hungarian dominions, which remained uncursed by a

foreign yoke. The sultan, however, solemnly engaged to deliver up the other states to “the heir of his good friend John,” when she was grown of an age, capable of taking upon herself the reins of government. Czerina and her mother sought refuge, in the first instance, in the city of Lippa, beyond the river Tibiscus, and afterwards, on Hermanstadt becoming the seat of the Transylvanian government, they took up their residence in that capital. Some few years elapsed when the Count Pereny, having effected his escape from the dungeons of Vienna, again appears upon the scene, to renew his suit for the hand of the Princess Beatrice. At the earnest instance of the Queen-dowager, backed by the authoritative sanction of Solyman, the hand of the graf was accepted. A day was appointed for the nuptials, which were intended to be solemnized at Buda, under the auspices, and graced by the presence of the all-powerful sultan. The Drincess Beatrice, in company with her affianced husband, and under the escort of a small troop, repaired from Transylvania to the Hungarian capital.

On the skirts of the forest of Belivar, the party was surprised by one of those strong bodies of Wallachian marauders, which, in that age, superadded the horrors of rapine and pillage, to the other evils that accumulated on the wretched Magyari.—Pereny and his attendants were put to flight, and the princess was borne away, but whither was never ascertained. The gathering strength of a most wild rumour soon fixed upon Vicchy of Eissenburg, for the leader of these Wallachians: he was a Hungarian nobleman of the highest rank, a near kinsman of the Princess Beatrice, and further related to the throne, having married the cousin of the late monarch. At the period of King John’s demise, this man was governor of Temeswar, and high constable of the kingdom; but shortly after that event, he resigned both offices. As the character of Vicchy had hitherto ranked above all suspicion, the testimony of several of Pereny’s

retinue, though seemingly corroborated by their earnest and unanimous asseveration, was rejected by most men as being utterly incredible. It was thought right, however, to cite Eissenburg to appear before the tribunal of the king (*judicium regale*), to answer to the charge. To the surprise of every one, he disregarded the summons. He was a second time required to surrender himself, under the penalty of otherwise being declared guilty of the weighty accusation preferred against him : still, whether in contumacy or apprehension, cannot be affirmed, he neglected to deliver up his person ; and although every body knew, he was all along residing on his own estate, by the laws of Hungary, until his crime was established, and sentence pronounced, his patent of nobility secured him from arrest.* At last, however, the notoriety of the affair, and the absence of Eissenburg, being deemed sufficient to supersede the necessity of any more formal process, the detail of evidence was somewhat summarily followed up by an attainder of outlawry.

The brideless bridegroom, after the calamitous occurrence we have just narrated, only showed himself for a short period at the court of Hermanstadt ; and then, having consigned his son, Maximilian, to the guardianship of the boy's uncle, the regent Martinuzzi, he left his native land, with the view, it was conjectured, of drowning the bitter memory of his loss in other scenes, and the excitement of travel. For many subsequent years the movements of the wanderer cannot be traced ; but some time anterior to the date of the following history, Peter Pereny was currently reported to have fallen a victim to the plague, in one of the villages of Styria. His son, Maximilian, assumed his style and titles, and took possession of the family estates.

* Volumus etiam quod nec nos, nec posteri nostri aliquo unquam tempore (militantes vel) servientes (patriæ) capiant, nisi primo citati fuerint et ordine judicario convicti. 11 Dec. St. Stephen.

Meanwhile Transylvania was menaced with being appropriated by the sultan, under the same insidious pretexts, that had answered but too successfully with Hungary. But the destinies of the house of Zapola were committed to no ordinary hands, and the regent was not likely a second time to be taken by surprise. By the intrigues of the Queen-dowager Isabella, who, grown jealous of the conjunct authority of Martinuzzi, distrusted his purposes, the affections of the nobles were alienated from him, and a deep conspiracy was concerted for his destruction. Isabella's principal agent herein was Valentian Count Turascus, who had been some years before tricked into prison by Solyman, and had only lately effected his escape; he was a Hungarian general of the greatest reputation.

About the time that Solyman directed the pasha of Buda to penetrate Transylvania with all his forces, and Peter, prince of Moldavia, a savage marauding chief, poured his wild hordes into the same province, count Turascus took the opportunity, after several jars, followed by formal and superficial reconciliations, to break out into open revolt against Martinuzzi, whom he proclaimed a tyrant and a traitor. To add to the desperate state of things, a fourth army made an irruption into the principality. This consisted of a strong body of Imperialists, aided by a few Spanish regiments, the whole under the command of Castaldo, marquis of Piadena. And now, assailed at once by foreign force, and shaken to the centre by intestine division, all men prognosticated, from such fatal concurrence, the ruin of their country. The dominions of John of Zapola seemed on the point of passing from the rule of his house wholly and for ever, when the enterprising valour of one man changed the aspect of affairs. The lord regent, substituting the spear for the crosier, and, so to speak, buckling on the cuirass over the cassock, hurried from one end of the land to the other, and roused by his eloquence and exhortations, the

whole population to arms. In an incredible short space of time, there was a general rally of the Hungarian patriots, and he found himself at the head of between fifty and sixty thousand combatants. It is not for us to follow Martinuzzi through the brilliant operations of that campaign, which only closed by the utter discomfiture of the queen's party, and the rout and dispersion of his opponents, whether foreign or domestic. He first encountered the pasha of Buda, who, after suffering a complete overthrow, fled, with such precipitation as, according to the historian, to retire in one day over an extent of country, which it had taken him a week to measure in advance. Valentinian Count Turascus was then laying siege to Chonad ; and Martinuzzi, informed of his position, made a hasty and fatiguing march to that city. Allowing his soldiers only a small interval for refreshment, he surprised the rebel camp in the darkness of the night, took four thousand prisoners, and left two thousand five hundred dead on the field of battle. This important victory entirely broke the spirit of the malcontents ; the grafs, maylat, and balassi, who were preparing to revolt, made their submissions, and no better resource was left to a great number of the mutinous barons, holding like hostile sentiments, though of inferior rank. But the mild disposition of Martinuzzi, or his prudence, tempered the insolence of his triumph ; and his sequent conciliatory conduct, was productive of more solid benefit to his country, than was the victory itself. Turascus returned to Hermanstadt, not as a conqueror, but as a captive.

Being shortly after set at liberty, he was treated with the greatest confidence and regard. Indebted, therefore, for honours and attentions, in lavishing which Martinuzzi was unremitting, Valentinian Turascus became gradually, by gratitude, as well as interest, not disinclined to join the opinion of those, who, for other reasons, desired the stability of the regent's government. Hardly allowing his

soldiers a day's respite, our belligerent prelate came up with Peter the Moldavian, and although the Transylvanian force was considerably inferior, he so out-generated that ferocious freebooter, that he was compelled to betake himself to flight, in the course of which five thousand Moldavians are said to have perished. A more pleasing trophy of this victory was the rescue of a thousand prisoners, whom these war-hawks were carrying off into captivity. Martinuzzi, finally, prepared to measure himself with the imperial general, but such was the terror the warlike gownsman had inspired, that Castaldo did not choose to abide the issue; he hastily drew off his forces beyond the borders, and left the seven castles* free and unpolluted by the presence of a single invader. The most solid reward, and the most salutary consequence of these exploits of Martinuzzi, are alike to be found in those terms of accommodation, which they enabled him to obtain. The sultan, astonished at the attitude the province had taken, under the presiding genius of the man, on whom, only a few months before, he had pronounced sentence of deposition, and whom he had stripped (on paper) of all his dignities, sacerdotal and civil, yielding to the ascendant of "Præsul Georgius," wrote to acknowledge his authority, and propose an armistice. Ferdinand, not slow in emulating the policy of the Musselman, likewise made advances of reconciliation.

Martinuzzi's powers of diplomacy were equally eminent with his military capacity, and he possessed the talents, both of managing men and conducting business. He so dexterously made the rival views of these great potentates counterbalance each other, that he concluded an honourable peace with both parties. Solyman consented to the

* Septem Castra, as Transylvania was formerly called, but what castles were signified is doubtful. See Simonis de Keza Chron. p. 83, and Theodorii de Thuringia; Vitam S. Elisabetha, cap. 6. p. 40. Edit. Pray. and Pray. Dissert. iv. p. 75. v. 98. 99. vi. 109., and Thûrûcz, p. 1. c. 24., and Palma Notit. Rer. Ungar. P. 1. p. 99.

retrocession of the Banat of Temeswar, and again bound himself to evacuate the rest of Hungary, when the heir of John of Zapola should arrive at an age to govern. Ferdinand engaged, that no imperial army should thence-forward transgress the boundary of the Theisse. That monarch at the same time came to terms with the sultan, and the foundation of the accord, as Augerius Busbequius reports, was the payment of an annual tribute to the Porte of 30,000 Hungarian ducats ; he, moreover, nominated Martinuzzi to the archbishopric of Strigonie,* which was one of the chief cities, contained in that small division of Lower Hungary, which the Austrians had first acquired on the death of king John, and since tenaciously held. The dignity of the Roman purple was not long behind.†—Cardinal Martinuzzi, thus triumphant against the foreign foe, insensibly seized the helm of state, as his self-inherent and indisputable right. Though he did not think fit to assume the title of king, he at least reserved to himself, whenever he pleased, the power of ascending the throne ; and, however ambitious his views in that regard, it appeared impossible they should exceed, what his courage and capacity warranted his entertaining. He possessed that lively confidence in himself, which is the pledge of success, and he bore his exaltation with that calm and modest equanimity,‡ which ever accompanies conscious desert. It was soon seen, that his versatile genius could adapt itself with equal facility to the toils of government, as to the spirit-stirring occupation of the camp, and the learning of the schools. In fact, the long continuance of his administration, after having abolished the co-ordinate

* The possession of this see gives the title of Primate, and the office of Chancellor of Hungary.

† Istuanf. l. xvii., and Hist. du Card. Martin. l. v. and Histoire des Troubles de Hongrie, par M. Fumée Sieur de Genille, liv. iv.

‡ Totam tamen eam tantæ dignitatis et fastigii accessionem moderato animo tulit.—Istuanf.

authority of the queen, supposes the arts of policy as well as of war—*Ore manuque, consultor patriæ.**

The spirit of Isabella, as a woman, and her maternal apprehensions, alike quailed before the ascendancy of the prelate, as the genius of Antony cowered and felt rebuked, within the sphere of Cæsar. The few leading and preliminary events, with which we have detained the reader in the above, we are afraid, tedious abstract, happened several years before the opening of our story. They will be found to interweave with the course of the narrative, and we trust the candid reader will excuse any incompleteness, incident to the foregoing faint and imperfect summary, since its only object was to imbue him with the spirit of the scene, on which he will shortly enter.

* Prudent. Apotheosis.

CHAPTER II.

INTRODUCTORY, (CONTINUED.)

Erat eo tempore maximis ad invicem hostilitatibus totius regni facta turbatio ; crebra ubique ; latrocinia, viarum obsessio ; audiebantur passim, immo fiebant incendia infinita.

WE shall have to make mention of the hordes of nomadic Moldavians and Wallachians, which, ever since the invitation of Ladislas, laid waste and depopulated the south-eastern extremity of Christian Europe. Some previous notice of these people would seem, therefore, indispensable to the reader's right understanding of the ensuing pages.

Wallachia and Moldavia (called by the Turks, Bugdan) had been successively over-run and subjected, by the Goths, the Visigoths, the Huns,* the Gepidæ, the Bulgarians, and the Tartars. Apprehensive, in case of further resistance, of being reduced, like Greece, to slavery, they submitted, in 1418† to the Ottoman arms, and their national existence was made thenceforth dependent on the yearly payment of a trifling tribute (2000 crowns per

* Thûrócz, alluding to the flight of the people of Pannonia at the approach of Attila, adds — “ Solis Walachis ipsorum qui erant pastores sponte in Pannonia remanentibus.”

† An inscription in Templo Leutschoniæ, says 1484.

annum) to the sultan.* However, at the time we commemorate, the population of modern Wallachia † presented rather the semblance of innumerable parties of banditti than the usual characteristics of a distinct, though conquered nation. Dark indeed, and stained with blood, are the annals of these people — “*C'étoient des hommes sauvages,*” says the historian, “ qui par leur aspect et surtout par leur mœurs resembloient plus à des bêtes féroces qu'à des hommes — Ils n'avoient d'autre nourriture que le lait de leur troupeaux. Ils passoient les jours entiers dans les cavernes d'où ils ne sortoient que pour fendre sur les voyageurs qu'ils dépouilloient et tuoient impitoyablement. Ils ne connoissoient point de profession plus noble que celle de vivre de rapines et de brigandages.” And yet, predatory as had long been their habits, and ignorant and savage as were this singular race by nature (the Changlæ, as they are designated by William de Rubruquis), they claimed the honour of being the descendants of ancient Rome, uncontaminated by any admixture of barbarian blood ; the direct posterity, in fact, of those Roman settlers, whom the Emperor Aurelian (when the astonished Eagle retired before the fell swoop of the northern Vultures) left in Dacia, on his relinquishing the province to the Goths and Vandals.

Such was their boast, and however vain and incredible it may at first sound, the striking affinities between their vernacular dialect and the Latin language, and the circumstance of the costume of the lower orders being precisely similar to that of the Dacians, as those people are represented on Trajan's Pillar in Rome, would seem

* Shortly after the date of our tale, however (in 1574), Moldavia was utterly subjugated.

† The name of the Wallachians, in the time of the Byzantine historians, was common to many different nations. See Anna Commenis Alex. liv, viii.

to establish on no weak grounds the truth of their tradition. With this, however, we have here no concern, but dismiss the topic, by referring the curious reader to the memoir of M. d'Anville on ancient Dacia.* Following murder and rapine, as a profession, these roving depredators (*de sanguine Rumena—de sanguine Romano*), as they were proud to believe, would scatter themselves over Hungary, carrying off the inhabitants with their cattle and goods. Their numbers, in their excursive hostilities, were to be counted by thousands and tens of thousands, which successively swept the fertile country, like a swarm of locusts, carrying dismay and desolation on their wing. Having loaded themselves with whatever may have escaped the infidel or the Austrian,† they were immediately lost amid the impervious woods and morasses, which overspread the face of the land. Like a wave which had spent itself on the beach, they would withdraw, without let or hindrance, to the dominions whence they issued, and so leave room, after a brief interval, for the inroad of fresh bands of their countrymen, equally greedy of spoil and slaughter: “What the locust left, was devoured by the palmer-worm;” while, year after year, the booty grew less and less, and the gleanings became scarcer. These several parties of marauders would form so many nuclei, round which the refuse of Hungary, the evil disposed of all descriptions, were glad

* Consult also Eugel. *Commentat. De Expedit. Trajani ad Danubium et origine Valachorum*, p. 283. seq.

† The Christian invaders of this distracted land seem to have emulated the Turk in their treatment of what they ought to have held in reverence. “*Regni nostri pars quæ Austriam attingit*,” writes King John to Pope Clement VII. — “*solo est æquata; omnes ecclesiæ, proventusque eorum ab adversariis dissipantur; neque humanorum neque divinorum habitus est respectus.*”—Given in the *Mélange Historique de Noel Moreau*. See also the supplication of the “*Status et Ordines Regni*,” held at Presburg, to Ferdinand. It is given in the *Hist. de Hongrie*, tom. i. liv. ii. p. 144. *et suiv.*

to range themselves, if not out of lawless sympathy, yet for the sake of protection ; — such as being gradually accustomed to live by plunder, were become incapable of industry ; such as were driven by these unrepressed depredations to shake off all bands of government, whom their natural disposition, or grinding hardship and an embittered spirit, rendered fit for any service, in which they could, at the same time, gratify their vengeance, and find subsistence — the disbanded *Dolbatsche*, or soldier of infantry — the escaped criminal, — and more particularly the *Kanactz*, or cattle-keeper — the *Gulya*, or cattle-driver. These, inured to toil, their lives nurtured by long impunity and the incitements of penury to crime, would consort with the Wallachian invader, and join him in his ravages of their native land ; or, remaining stationary, would indicate, as the price of their own immunity, the fittest persons and places for attack ; of course selecting those, by whose destruction private pique might be safely gratified, or the love of pillage best be satiated. Half the *csardas*, or inn-keepers, in Hungary were in league with these robbers, either as receivers or as accomplices. Even those serfs and herdsmen, who, to all appearance, obtained their livelihood by honest industry, were more or less connected with the foreign bands — sometimes to the extent of accompanying them in their predatory incursions through the provinces. Their miserable want of education, or rather the peculiar education induced by habit and circumstance, which these peasants received from their youth upwards, acted as an initiation and stimulus to a life of desperate depravity. The untaught youth, constantly pasturing their sheep or swine in the wooded solitudes of Erdély, seldom, during the long summer, approached the habitations of men. There was something in the very immensity of the forests, by which they were surrounded, that impressed on the soul a feeling of sublime immunity. Secluded from all observation, they were often tempted to

try their hand at a theft, whether it were of cattle or of kreutzners, and to shed the blood of deer or buffalo; or, in an extreme case of precocious genius, perhaps to take aim with the axe, they always carried about them, at the travelling Jew or butcher.

Such juvenile feat made an admirable inition for the incipient depredator and assassin. It consequently sometimes happened, that the Hungarian peasant, from being, at first, the mere spy, or, at most, the tolerated comrade of these warlike free-bands, would himself attain command and authority in their armies; and instances are recorded where, by his abilities and valour, he has risen to the rank of Richter, or independent chieftain, over a body of many thousand troopers. Whenever this was the case, the circumstance was found to operate with some advantage to the wretched community, so long the prey of these lawless depredators. The arms of the Wallachians were found capable of being directed with effect against the common enemy, as was exhibited to their immortal glory, by the decisive victory they obtained over Bajazet, at Tour Rouge, near Hermanstadt in 1492. But the aid and good service which the Roman barbarians experienced from the isolated co-operation of the Hungarian cattle-keepers and other peasantry, was trifling when compared with the advantage they reaped, from associating to them the bands of the Cyganis, or, as they were more commonly called in Transylvania, the Pharaoh Nepek.*

The mention of these people opens a remarkable chapter in the history of mankind, though it would lead us too far out of our way were we to do more, than barely enter upon it.

All the world knows that, at the commencement of the fifteenth century, swarms of strangers, usually denominated gipsies (*Homines furtis in primis intenti*), visited

* Pharaoh's people.

most of the countries on the continent. They gave themselves out for Egyptian pilgrims, but it clearly appears, from the researches of Grellman and others, that their representation must have been untrue. From what quarter of the world they originally migrated still remains a disputed point. The probability, however, is, they were one of the itinerant tribes of India, whose course reason or fortune directed to the banks of the Nile, thence to transport themselves, shortly after, into Europe. The exterminating war of Timur Beg might have driven these Hindus to seek refuge in the Persian desert, whence their wanderings eventually led them, over the Isthmus of Suez, into Egypt. However this may prove, it is certain that on their first appearance in Europe, these vagrants inspired sentiments, wholly different from what are associated with their reputation at the present day. Their assumption of the character of pilgrims, at once elicited respect and obtained them protection ; and they were hailed with uncommon admiration wheresoever they showed themselves. Hungary and Transylvania were their high route into Germany, and thousands of families chose to make a permanent settlement in those territories, instead of accompanying their brethren further on their endless exody.

If the period, at which we have taken up this history, was not free from the reproach of superstition, neither was it so servilely credulous an age, as were the centuries preceding. The system of astrology still retained its fascinating hold on the imagination ; and one can hardly wonder at it, for who does not feel how sublime a thing it must have been to entertain a faith in the speculation of heaven ? But, as knowledge and science progressed, the fictions of alchemy were fast clearing away, like the igneous exhalations of the earth dissipating in the out-breaking light of the “new-born day.” Witchcraft, and all the collateral arts of necromancy, were consigned to merited opprobrium, and their professors to most un-

merited persecution ; and, amongst other sources of delusion, some time laid aside, as being out of date, by the more sagacious futurity-mongers, was that peculiar species of sorcery denominated chiromancy, which the Cyganis or gipsies, having picked up in the age of which we treat, immediately adopted as a distinguishing craft and characteristic. In addition to this, they boasted a familiarity with the secret virtues of plants and simples, and professed to exorcise evil spirits out of bewitched cattle, by means of roots and amulets, known only to themselves. Moreover, during many years they monopolized the trade of gold-washing, that is, collecting and clearing the particles of the *aranyos föveny*, or auriferous sand deposited in the shoals and sandbanks of the Olt, Dobrieza, Drave, and those other rivulets and streams of Hungary and Transylvania, whose beds are to this day sifted occasionally in search of the precious ore.

The Cyganis seem to have naturally possessed very acute and delicate perceptions of sound, so that, besides the means of emolument already detailed, their musical talents, held in no light estimation by the untaught peasantry of Hungary, conjured at least as many kreutzers into their pockets, as the case called for. They were occupied at intervals in making iron tools, horn spoons, baskets, and other articles of a similarly trivial and ingenious description ; and, after a while, they became especially celebrated for their singular taste and facility in fabricating the instruments of war ; in return for which manufacture, and partly in recompence for their bravery and personal achievements, whole hordes of these Hindostanee would frequently receive passports and seals from the princes or magnats, whom they aided with their workmanship, or under whom they served.

In Transylvania, the ruling waivodes had long granted letters of protection to these artificers in iron work. Many of such safe-conducts of the located Cyganis are still extant, one of which we quote, as bearing upon the

history we have in hand. It is a document of King Ladislas, dated 1496, for the knowledge of which we are indebted to Friedwalsky, who cites it in his "Mineralogy." Therein it is ordered, "That every officer and subject, of whatever rank and condition, do allow to Count Thomas Polgar, leader of five hundred tents of wandering Cyganis, free residence every where, and on no account to molest him or his descendants, or his or their people, because they had prepared military stores for the Bishop Sigismond at Fünfkirchen. — *Ladislas.*"

In the above record the reader may, perhaps, be surprised to find the rank of Count attributed to the conductor of a gang of gipsies. But it seems on their first arrival in Hungary, that each tribe had its own leader, distinguished by the proud title of Knight, Count, Duke or King, and through whose medium they were more readily summoned by the officers of state, when their services were required against the infidel. These people formed a kind of society or government among themselves, which set all more enlightened legislation at defiance, and, though ill-fitted for executing any extensive military enterprise, still any opposition to their progress or their will was not lightly to be risked. The son of the aforesaid Count Polgar, who, besides being the hereditary leader of five hundred tents of gipsies, was invested with unlimited authority over all the inferior chiefs of the Cygani tribes in Hungary, was the celebrated Alaric Polgar, also passing by the name of Count Ragotzy, with whom the reader will presently become acquainted. That gipsy leader was of another metal from his father; so far from furnishing military stores in aid of the government, we find reason to believe that he exerted all his influence over his predatory subjects to inculcate disobedience to the laws as the prime obligation of a Cygani, and the necessity of his position in society. The various tribes, who, beneath the rule of Count Thomas Polgar, were so many parties of pilferers and fortune-tellers, in-

variably tolerated, and frequently (as we have seen in one instance) placed under the especial protection of the authorities, assumed under the auspices and aspiring conduct of his son, the formidable attitude of leagued and organized bands of robbers, scorning all resistance, and setting every attempt at defiance to subject and civilize them. One principal cause of this impunity, as we before intimated, is to be sought in the division of parties, incident to a feeble or restricted executive, and to the otherwise frightful state of public affairs, where all the bands of social life seemed resolved back into their original elements; however, the chief confidence of these wild and lawless companies rested in the synchronal existence of the Wallachian and Moldavian banditti, with many of whose Richters, Alaric Polgar had formed a strict and federative alliance. But any combined plan of operation, having for its object the imposition of a new dynasty over the Magyar nation, and the exaltation of the conqueror, does not appear hitherto to have been in the contemplation of Count Alaric. His views, as we have said, were confined to scouring and devastating the land, not to conquering and subjecting it. The gangs of the Cyganis, whose tactics were much more adapted for plunder and marauding than for open warfare, wandered up and down, committing spoil upon the country, and perpetrating with impunity the wildest excesses of oppression. Their numbers were often very inconsiderable, and if ever they met (which was but seldom) with any opposition, they avoided coming to a general engagement, by betaking themselves to flight. Very many Moldavian chiefs, were, in like manner, used to assemble their independent tribes, sometimes confining their ravages to the neighbouring province of Transylvania, at others spreading themselves over the fertile vales of Lower Hungary; but in all cases, their incursions were so sudden, that, even in the most distant quarter, the absence of the enemy was no reason why any district

should esteem itself in safety. Still, as much as possible, they would keep within a day or two's summons of their great richter, who, at the period of the opening of our story, was Peter, Prince of Moldavia, famed for his courage and strength of body, but stigmatized by contemporaries with the epithet of bloody.

The danger of this universal licence was derived from the factious and turbulent spirit of the kingdom, which nothing contributed more to increase or to encourage, than the precarious allegiance of the feudal noble, who, in too many instances, not merely submitted to their exactions, but joined himself in amity with the Wallachian richter, and the gipsy count, either for his own immediate safety, or to serve purposes, even more inexcusable. Ever engaged in hereditary or personal animosities, or confederacies with his neighbours, and free from all salutary restraint, during this temporary dissolution of sovereign authority, he would sally from his castle, sometimes in quest of plunder, sometimes of private resentment and revenge. The desolate condition of the country, over which these various and savage foes extended the fangs of their rapacity, might, to adopt the figure of Gibbon, have been compared by Homer to the two lions growling over the carcase of a mangled stag.* Such a disorganization of society became no slight obstacle to the introduction of a regular administration of justice. The loose police, incident to the feudal constitution, was a machine of dangerous and delicate management, ever apt to recoil upon the hand which held it. Being wholly inadequate to cases of emergency, it was, at the period of history which we are reviewing, every where falling into disuse. In Hungary this was more particularly exemplified; there the barons rarely acted in union, and,

* ————— λεονθ' ὡς δηρινθητην,
Οτι ουρεος κορυφησι περι κταμενες ελαιοφιο
Αμφω πειναοντε μεγα φρουνεοντε μαχεσθον.

though for the most part capable of laughing to scorn any attack on their own strong holds, the *prædia* or territory of each was too inconsiderable in itself to support the burden of a regular military force, for purposes of general security. As the strength of the government, under existing circumstances, was ill able to cope with so enormous a grievance, Martinuzzi was led to remedy it by policy. Their habits of war and depredation had given the Wallachian bands experience, hardiness and courage, and by enlisting in his body of mercenaries many of their choicest captains, he, in a great measure, removed from that nation, at once the temptation and the ability of much troubling Transylvania. He deferred the vindication of justice, and to endeavour the re-establishment of order in the community to a more favourable juncture, when, by the assistance of one of the neighbouring powers (without whose co-operation indeed, the attempt seemed hopeless) these licentious brigands might either be expelled the country, or tamed to the salutary yoke of law and government. Having thus, with whatever tediousness, initiated the reader into the peculiarities of the times and countries, which make the foundation of our story, we will no longer detain him from its perusal.

END OF THE INTRODUCTORY CHAPTERS.

MANUSCRIPT I.

“ He gave him first his breeding,
Then showered his bounties on him like the hours,
That, open-handed, sit upon the clouds,
And press the liberality of Heaven
Down to the laps of thankful men.”

Ben Jonson.

THE sober sunshine of autumn had succeeded to the heats of summer, and the undulating tracks of forest, which, spreading themselves over a vast region of country, gave a name to the theatre of our history,* had begun to assume that dappled livery, with which the varied year would fain disguise and beautify its decay, when we take leave to commence our narrative.

It wanted an hour of midnight, and the moon was sailing high overhead, and the vast curtain, which shuts in heaven, might have made a queen long to deck her with a mantle of that same regal hue, begemmed with starry ornaments, when the attention of a sentinel, who was pacing an outer rampart of the city of Hermanstadt, was attracted by the echo of horses' hoofs in the distance, and soon after, by the approach of three horsemen towards

* Erdély is derived from the word *Erdeu*, signifying in the Hungarian tongue, Forest. See Apend. Epist. de Orig. Hungar. Thúrócz, however, it should be observed, gives another origin to the word.—See Chron. Hungar.

the western barrier. They came on at length, and, having demanded admittance within the gates, were informed, that they must wait without till morning. This intimation excited the manifest wrath of the equestrians, who loudly vented their indignation on the hapless head of the sentinel,—consigning the city, its regent, and inhabitants to the tender mercies of that personage, who for the last eighteen hundred years, has had a monopoly of such sort of offerings.

“I tell you what, good sir travellers,” exclaimed the sentinel, whom the pertinacious abuse and riotous conduct of the men, at length began to exasperate beyond his modicum of patience: “if you don’t desist from this clamour, I shall be under the unpleasant necessity of sending a quietus in the shape of a leaden bullet through your jerkins.”

“At your pleasure, friend,” replied one of the trio thus threatened, at the same time advancing his horse out of the shadow of a jutting barbacan into the moonlight. “Level your musket; if you hit us we will trouble no further; but depend upon’t we’ll not cease from demanding admittance till you do.”

The person who thus spoke was apparently in the prime of manhood, and clad in the knightly armature of an Olah, or roving chief of Wallachia. The other two horsemen appeared his followers.

“Well, only to think how fool-hardy some folks are,” exclaimed the sentinel; “but that’s no concern of mine; I must do my duty; so, mark me, you, careering there so jauntily, there’s a cloud now covers the moon’s disk; if, ere she shows her face again, you be not out of the reach of my carabine, why take the consequence, that’s all,” and with these words the man presented his piece.

The horsemen set up a loud and long laugh—a laugh of contemptuous defiance. Even while the sound rung in the welkin, the moon slowly emerged beyond the flimsy veil which obscured her beams, and as the last

rim of the planet broke from the sheltering cloud into the immeasurable ether, the man fired. There was the flash—the report, and then the eddying smoke hid for a few seconds from the sentinel the fallen figure of the horseman, at whom he had aimed, and whom he naturally apprehended he had shot. What then was his amazement, as the atmosphere cleared, to behold him sitting his horse with as firm a seat, and apparently as unconcerned as if his life had not just been placed in such imminent risk. Immediately the sentinel conceived a more exalted opinion of those clamorous equestrians, and remembering the hour chosen for their visitation, and their apparent impassableness to fire-arms, he began to entertain some vague apprehension that they were three spirits riding this upper world, in the guise of carnal warriors. While these suspicions were producing sad confusion in the head of the simple sentinel, the captain of the night-guard came upon the scene, and demanded the cause of the signal he had just heard. The sentinel made his report. After a minute's thought, the subaltern addressed himself to the horseman, who was nearest, and acquainted him, in more urbane terms, than had been hitherto employed, with the utter impossibility of his being admitted within the city that night.

The individual to whom this was addressed, inclining his body forward, and, laying his hand upon the mane of his steed, made answer, by inquiring whether the speaker were the captain of the night-guard? Being informed that such was the fact, the horseman rejoined in an authoritative voice, “ Well, then, do you understand, I *must* have speech of the lord regent to night: I bear missives from Coloswar; so do not oppose our entrance, lest worse come of it.”

“ Why,” returned the subaltern, as if deliberating with himself, “ were Father Dominick in the way—but no,” he added, lowering his voice to a tone of significance,

"his reverence hath ceased to walk o' nights, as was his wont."

This intelligence, for some reason or other, seemed to strike with an electric force on the ears of the equestrian; who, starting his horse forward, as if thrown off his guard, exclaimed, "What's that you say, Hubert?" The officer, without paying any attention to this interrogatory, cast a side and scrutinizing glance at his comrade, and resuming his official reserve, drily remarked, "I repeat, sirs, 'tis impossible!" but ere the words were well out of his mouth, the horseman impetuously interposed —

"Impossible! I tell you, I will lie this night in yonder citadel, though all the fiends of hell gainsaid me! Where *is* Father Dominick — not walk o' nights! — what means he? Is he mad? All Hungary up, and Transylvania in flames, and Father Dominick not out upon the ramparts — you must lie i' your throat, man! And such a night, not to steal him from his bed of thorns! — Can I believe my ears? — the Archduke in arms, and he not walk the ramparts! Oh, 'tis palpably false! The sultan in Belgrade, and Father Dominick bed-ridden! Then, indeed, are we on the eve of some convulsion of the elements that constitute the mind of man. But though all nature were in universal uproar, I will speak with a voice, might rive the solid earth, and pierce the depths of chaos and of darkness,—a voice more fearful than the thunder; and though the towers of Hermanstadt topple from their foundation at the dread subject of our parley, it shall not interrupt me; though the grave of John of Zapola yawn, and give up its sheeted relics at our least whisper, — though this be, which cannot well be otherwise, still I swear, Father Dominick and I *will* balance accounts this night—I swear it! If I be perjured, it is for him to tremble—So be it, in God's name!"

"Amen, in God's name!" murmured a hollow and

well-known voice in the speaker's ear. He started ; then, with a strong effort to recover his self-possession, he slowly turned his head. The response came from Father Dominick, who stood close beside the knight.

The latter, it appeared, had been so hurried away by the extreme violence of his feelings, and was so lost to all outward objects, whilst his spirit found vent in language, not less mysterious than impassioned, that he had not remarked the being, whose presence he so earnestly insisted upon, detach himself from the stretch of brushwood and huge masses of rock, which were scattered over the heath, and glide with an admirable mixture of silence and celerity, towards the base of the ramparts ; so that it was not till the holy father was close upon him, and had delivered the response we have just related, that he became aware of his proximity. The torrent of rage and invective in which the chieftain had just indulged, contributed to throw him off his balance. He could not readily bear up against the reflux of his feelings. The man, whose appearance he invoked with such indignant violence, having, like a spectre, obeyed the summons of his enchanter, and acknowledged the potency of the spell, awed him back in spite of himself, into comparative insignificance. He lost somewhat of his wonted self-possession, and his dissolute nature stood abashed and humbled from its late passion, merely, as it would seem, by the overpowering appulse of the loftier mind of the ghostly father.

The monk was wrapped "from top to toe," in the flowing habit of his order, girded to his shape by a strong cord, which, suspending a leaden crucifix of uncommon size, fell downwards to the edge of the robe. With his arms folded over his breast, his head bent, and his cowl extended over his face, he abided the determination of the chieftain. Finding, however, that that individual, apparently overwhelmed with the consequence of his own

violence, made no attempt to break the silence, he himself shortly spoke.

"Dismiss thine attendants," he said in a hollow under voice: "they can wait for orders at St. Agatha, *you* will follow me."

Having thus delivered himself, the monk slowly moved away amid the thickets and underwood, which skirted the extensive heath in the quarter, from which he had first entered upon the scene. His form was soon after discerned in the half distance,—his apparel blending with the lights and shadows of the ground, like a spectre slowly vanishing away. For some moments the chieftain noted him, appearing and disappearing where the stunted tufts of arbutus and magnolia broke the uniformity of the moon-light heath, until the brow of a rising ground concealed him from his view; then, as if lost in inward musing:—"No," he muttered between his teeth; "no, he dare not play me false, though the stake he holds, and the pinnacle he aims at, might make such a man as he venture boldly, and my cognition of his position, perchance is the sole drawback between him and impunity:—um! I'll see to it:"—and the chieftain raised his voice, addressing himself to the captain of the guard.

There was a peculiarity in his tone and manner, that implied more than the literal purport of his words, as he said:—"Here, friend, receive this packet and a sealed box I have under my dolman, either of which contains a treasure dear to this land as is her sainted crown. If, ere to-morrow eve I do not, in my proper person, reclaim them of you, fly with them to the queen, the queen regent,—you mark me?—give them into her royal keeping, and, as you would ensure the promise of Unna, and value *the cause* you are pledged to, into no hands else. 'Tis a sealed commission, will you accept it?—speak." The officer intimated his consent by a slight inclination of the head. "Descend, then, the turret stairs, and take them, and do

you, Reginald and Walter, return to the drawbridge of St. Agatha. Should you not hear from me before the next sun-set, back to the Moldavian quarters, and tell Peter to look to himself, and to remember me as one sacrificed for his advantage; and when next you see Unna, give her this token," and drawing from his finger a ring, he handed it to one of the men, "'twill suffice—or if you say a word, be it only—revenge! Have a care of my gallant grey, meanwhile, and away with ye."

He consigned the reins of his barded destrier into his follower's hands, who, with his comrade, immediately retired at a pace, which soon carried them out of view, and the receding echoes of their horses' hoofs died away on the breeze, as an iron-grated wicket or sallyport, partially hidden from view by a massive advanced work of the barbacan, was thrown open by the officer who had just descended the stair, leading from the battlement to the archway beneath. He reached out his hand through the interstice to take the packet from the chief, who, after the man had received it, thrust through the aperture the heavier article, a small, though strongly secured iron box, previously enfolded in his muster-piece. "Be careful of them, sir," said the chief, in a low, but impressive voice; "and remember," he proceeded solemnly, "they are to be delivered into the queen mother's hands, and hers only. On your allegiance! Hubert;" he added, in an emphatic whisper; "and, *as you would fulfil the prophesy of Unna*, do this." The attentive federeary made no reply, but directly closed the wicket.

"So," thought the chief, "I am armed at all points for the *outrance*;" and he turned away from the barbacan to follow Father Dominick; when, at the distance of a few paces from the arched entrance underneath the porch, his eyes lit upon the ill-omened figure of the very person in question, who, quite motionless, stood with his face inclined towards the ground, and his dark robes folded round him. "There again!" thought the dark-eyed

chieftain, at the same time advancing towards the mysterious monk: "There again! he starts before my sight like an echo, and gives a palpable form to my unexpressed misdoubtings. Courage, Ragotzy! let not thy heart fail thee now. Think what mighty issues are on the cast; that cause is lost already, whose champion's spirit quails ere a blow be struck: then, come what can come, the worst is——" He paused in his mental argument as he stood beside Father Dominick, who remarked, as they both slowly directed their cautious steps along a scarce-tracked, although not precipitous path, which led to the summit of a rising ground. "I thought, from your delay, you might have changed your mind, and I came back, hoping to find it so. It had been better; you can have nothing to say befitting me to hear: our paths lie as far asunder as earth is from heaven. Would you would yet pause! you rashly venture your footing on the verge of a dizzy precipice; young man, t'would try a sounder head than yours, and you may be nearer the brink than you imagine. Leave Hermanstadt—for both our sakes t'were wiser."

"For yours!" interrupted the other in a low under-growl, which, although scarcely intended by the speaker, reached the ears of the Holy Father, who continued:—

"I repeat, Count Ragotzy, for *both* our sakes,—your's temporally; mine, perhaps,"—his voice trembled, and breaking off, he added in a milder tone: "let this matter end here, and I will forgive the past — the present!"

"The past, the present, and the future," said the other, repeating the sentence significantly, and laying a strong accent on the last word—*occulta veritas tempore patet!*—There was a long and solemn pause—both parties relapsed into the silence of unuttered thought, holding communion with their hearts, whilst a crowd of conflicting retrospection, thronged on their memories, and apprehensions of approaching evil, crude, undefined, and dreadful, flitted, as if from a new opened source, like

vague glimpses of the mysterious future, across their brains.

Having reached the summit of the gentle eminence, they stopped short—a thicket composed of stunted brushwood (the meagre efforts of a soil unfavourable for vegetation,) and a few dwarf trees, now besprent with dew and moon-light, that mingled in prismatic beauty, crowned the ascent. There, halting for a while, neither seemed disposed to interrupt the mutual silence, or to start the momentous subject they were on the point of discussing, and which evidently was still the uppermost in both their minds. From the point of view where they reposed themselves, they might behold, at a little distance, the towers and ramparts of the ancient Cibinium. The city reared its warrior battlements against the sky, and relieved by gloomy shadows, stood out sternly fair, with its double walls and glacis. It was situate, not far from the course of the rapid Olt, which, bending gracefully round the south side of the battlements with a broad sweep, shot from thence that beautiful stream of water, commonly called the Zibin, into the heart of the city; whilst beyond to the left, in mid moon-light, loomed against the starry horizon, like the dominating genius of the place, the frowning donjon-keep, to which Herman of Nuremberg gave his name. This night-view, though not extensive, was a beautiful one, and withal serene and solemn in its loveliness. Before them stretched the distant perspective of a wild moor, which was closed by an amphitheatre of swelling woodland, clothed in an atmosphere of yellow mist. A strange solitude reigned over that dark brown heath, intersected with masses of rock and furze, and chequered and dotted here and there with plots of close green-sward, bedecked with hoary rime, that, in the universal quiet, glittered like diamonds beneath the broad light of the silvery moon: solitude and silence, for the deep repose of the scene was undisturbed by any sound, save what was most in unison with the character of the night,—

save the low lulling clink of an unseen rill, tinkling under some neighbouring covert, or the soothing melancholy gurgling of many a mountain-streamlet far away, fretting and foaming in their contracted ravines. These made choral music on the lulled ear, like the mingled voices of the Numina loci—the rustica Numina Fauni. All nature seemed to sleep in the deep tranquillity of moon-light.—Occupied in planting their intellectual batteries, and as it were, furbishing their mental armoury for the onset, the monk and his companion might be likened to two gladiators in the arena; each confident in his own courage and prowess, yet unwilling to be the first to throw down the gage of defiance, which must bring the question of their difference to an issue. So there and thus they stood; that monk and chieftain, face to face, within a lance's length of each other,—the sole animations visible in the universal quietude.

After a long and fearful silence, Count Ragotzy sought to terminate the deep suspense, as to each other's purpose, under which they laboured—a suspense, the awful calm of which might be said to resemble one of those portentous pauses of nature, which precede some dreadful convulsion of the elements. “ You looked for my arrival to night?” he said; and this was delivered interrogatively, as much with the view of breaking the chilly and embarrassed silence, and so obliging his holy companion to speak, as from any doubts respecting the nature of the response. The monk made a slight affirmative motion with his head, and then after a moment added, “ Your emissary arrived in Hermanstadt yesterday.”

“ How then am I to interpret ?” began the chieftain.

“ Hear me, misguided man!” interrupted the other, and though his face worked for a moment, he spoke in a conciliatory tone,—“ let me once again condescend to the language of entreaty. Proceed in your present design, be it what it may, no further. By my care of thee in thy boyhood—by my preservation of thy being

—by the memory of what thou once promised—by the fatal certainty of what thou art—by thy departed innocence, and by all that I have done, and suffered by thy infliction, and for thy benefit ; I charge and adjure thee forego thy terrible, though unknown purpose. Urge me in this, thou threatenest, no further ; I am but a mortal man ;—be advised, Count Ragotzy, I now implore ; but beware ! remember my power, and assay not my temperament beyond bearing.”

The unfaltering spirit of the Count blenched not a jot, while, concentrating all his powers of voice, and all his energies of mind, he replied, “ Why these strange conjurings ? I am not now to learn how deeply I was formerly indebted to thy benevolence, though I may suspect your purpose in exhibiting such superfluous charity ; and be thy claims on my gratitude all you would have them, they cannot exceed the measure of my services to thee.”

“ Monster of insolence and ingratitude ! ” exclaimed the incensed father—“ what on my part, save hate and horror, can there be owing to such an abandoned as thyself ? ”

“ Your station, your fair name, your very life,” replied the other undauntedly—“ they are one and all in my discretion, and for years have been, proud man ! ”

“ Captain of brigands ! take heed,” ejaculated the priest with a quivering lip. “ Thou dost forget thyself, and knowest not what thou wouldest have. Be warned ere too late. Thou hast said and done too much already for the vile worm to tamely suffer. I have borne infinitely more at your hands, than I ever could have believed was in my nature to endure from aught of woman born. And yet thou dost accumulate thine injuries upon me, as if I were not that I am. I say again, take heed ! ”

The chieftain burst into a horrid laugh—a laugh of defiance.—“ Who art thou, then ? ” he exclaimed—“ Ha ! ha ! ha ! I hold thee for Father Dominick, the inscrutable

Father Dominick, the dreaded and the dark one!—but let that pass; I reck not now who thou art, nor indeed what thou seemest: here on this open moor, away from the sight and hearing of man, with nought but these dingles of furze and broom, this wilderness of crag and rock around us, and a clear expanse over our heads. Here at least we are on an equality; here we can declare our inmost souls, as is fitting, and comport ourselves as man ever should with man, free to speak, to strike,—free in the sight of Heaven."

"Well then, in God's name, so be it!" returned the monk, fronting the brigand as he spoke, in a calm, yet a hollow voice. "For this once I will borrow patience to listen to you, and will lay aside all reminiscences connected with your past behaviour, nor remember aught, save that you and I, face to face, this night,—but not alone, mark me! not alone, Ragotzy!—stand on this barren heath, for the last time. I will abdicate my rights, and descend from my pinnacle of power; but for the last time! Here then, Alaric, with earth, and air, and sky for witnesses, and countless spiritual natures, which are said to love to haunt the moon-lit scenes of earth, for lookers on; let us proceed to business!—with God's finger visibly impressed on all creation, with God's eye,—look up! How the massive cope of heaven hangs suspended over us!—with God's eye (mark me!) on our heart of hearts—why let's to work. If, Count Ragotzy, it own no terrors with which to inspire your soul—perhaps I wrong you. For me—here, take my hand, sir, and judge yourself, if my heart be not faithful to my will; the pulse beats strong and regularly, as in battle, doth it not?—The blood retires not at the contact. Not even in your grasp doth the flesh shrink, Alaric.—I am as calm as sleep—like that hand is my fixed soul and steadfast spirit,—I am as calm as sleep." The speaker paused; then withdrawing his hand from that of the count, at the same time fixing a commanding and penetrating glance

upon his countenance, as if to read his inmost heart—he added, “Now, what’s your errand?—Why hath Count Ragotzy left his canvass palaces, and come uninvited, like a disease, to Hermanstadt? On what ground of fell mischief hath he sought to darken my life by his presence, bound as he is, by the indenture of plighted oaths and solemn pledges, to forbear me? Or rather, let me ask, what sacred office does he wish me to yield up to be abused, like earth, for that which may be wrung from out its vitals?—What boon comes next, which must be granted to bribe thy venal and injurious tongue?—Nay, sir, I’ll to the point. Then in one word (and the monk’s voice fell to the modulated cadence proper to the sentiment,) in what way, my son, can I oblige you? what is it you require at my hands?” And his manner, whilst delivering this last inquiry, was replete with all the suavity of the most polished breeding and loftiest station. Whatever impression the above address made upon Ragotzy, neither his looks quailed nor his voice trembled, as, confronting the monk, with an eye as unappalled as his own, he replied.

“I have need of your services: you can oblige me; and you, of all mankind, only can.”

“How? say on,” rejoined the other, with a hollow and cold smile; “I have already showered no slight obligations upon Count Ragotzy, although it accords not with his present mood to acknowledge them; show me how further I can contribute to his pleasure; he shall find me, in truth, a very slave to his wishes.”—The monk ceased; but Ragotzy replied not.—“Well, well,” presently rejoined Father Dominick; “to what should all this preparation lead? Tell me, I say, what makes you hitherward?”

“Troops were out for the arrest of the prince of Moldavia, and I liked not wintering in their neighbourhood,” answered the count: “’tis too shrewd an atmosphere; you are milder here; do you understand?”

"Milder!" repeated the monk, and he stamped his foot violently on the earth — "you may find this too hot! — Death! Do you play with me? What's Peter the Bloody — well does he merit that infamous epithet! — what is he to you? But that's not what you would now speak of; — despatch your present need, sir, and let us part. Is't my purse?"

"Your purse!" repeated the Cygani leader; "trash! — gold purchases me not, nor my desires. Hark you! — at once I feel my great importance too deeply, to barter that which makes men wealthy, for any measured dross. I will have visible power — 'tis clear we distrust each other, and shall do so till the fates of both are closer linked, in happiness or ——"

"Death!" said the monk.

"Just so," returned the other, coolly.

Again there followed a long pause, which was broken by the monk. "Say at once where thy discourse drives," he cried — "disclose thy darker purpose."

"I love," answered the count; and he spoke hurriedly, as if the words required a strong effort to be driven from his lips, and that he hardly trusted himself, with the consideration of what he said.

"You love?" faintly echoed the monk, recoiling. "Can you love?" he presently added, still more inaudibly.

"A fair Hungarian, whom I would wed," rejoined the other, with the same forced and rapid intonation of voice as before.

The monk's visage lowered, and the livid lines of his pale countenance, as reflected in the full blaze of night, assumed a ghastly hue. With manifestly constrained air, perceiving, by the count's silence, that he awaited his reply, he said — "Well, well; and you opine, that the mediation of an old man like me will aid you in your suit. Albeit these lightgauds of gallantry, these gew-gaws of romance, possess no longer any value in my eyes.

The breathing of a loveliness doth stir in me no more the fine-discoursing chords, which yield the tongue's rare music.—Ragotzy," proceeded the monk, after a pause, and a mournful cloud overcast his countenance ; " I have done with the prevailing harmony of lovers ; I have done with sounds, that flow betwixt the uttering and the listening heart, to live in this for ever. Once, indeed," and the monk breathed a deep shivering sigh, given to some period that was long past, while the solemn melancholy that pervaded his whole demeanour affected his voice, and subdued its thrilling tones to an emphasis of the most touching pathos—" Once, indeed, though 'tis long agone since, I thought differently ! Nevertheless," he added, with a determined effort to recover his composure, in which he partially succeeded, " if I can help your suit, I'll do the most I can. Who is the lady ? — let me know her rank."

" By your leave I will describe her, so thou shalt better judge," returned the other :—" She is like a Princeely Bird, and is alone ! Her nest is ripe pearl blossoms, twined to wreaths for her to lie in, and 'tis emparadised on a strange promontory of exquisite red rubies, pointed in heaven, but loosed from veins of the earth, in drops, like blood ; and round about her crested aerie, columns of diamond and ethereal sapphire lift up and paint the beams, they tempt from above. Valueless stones, hewn from steep rocks with danger, and unimagined gems, dug i' the heart of the majestic world, wherein they hid, like precious thoughts, spread round her eminent dwelling. Enshrined in a serene and animated atmosphere, which, proper to herself, arrays her in its glory, she changes the appearances of those dazzling rays, which she rejects. Her wings are feathered dreams, rosy with early morn, with which sometimes she'll sail aloft, buoyed by a troop of airy acclamations, sustained and cushioned on the light cloud's

bosom ; at others, heaving with whispers i' the firma-
ment, she'll float, lucid and motionless, close to the
bounds of the under world ; but never touches earth,
though paved with hearts to tread on."

A deeper and a deeper tint of paleness gathered over the contracted features of the monk, as the count proceeded in his allegorical description, till, at the close, his eyes became fixed, and his whole aspect had in it something cadaverous and sepulchral. "What figure is this?" said he, at last, with the forced composure of a man, who deprecates his inward agitation becoming manifest.

"Tis a likeness of fancy," returned Count Ragotzy, carelessly ; "but how, think you, may I rob this nest, and own that Royal Bird ?—do you agree?"

"I agree!" repeated the monk, faintly.

"Ay," said the count, "you understand me ; — I would adventure this coy and excellent creature — ambition such as mine may be her suitor."

"It is not well," rejoined the other, after a short pause, in a deep low voice, whose singular calmness of enunciation sounded almost preternatural : "It is not well, I say, to aim at a thing so difficult ; — you have not let your eye stab your heart's hopes ? But I'm no *Œdipus* to see through shadows, and you as yet speak parables."

"Then, in a word, you must decide whether or not I am to wear this trophy on my bosom, since she is mine if you will lend a syllable," replied the count.

"I?" ejaculated the monk, through his pallid compressed lips, in a tone of strong, yet half-suppressed emotion.

"It rests with you, you know," said the other.

Father Dominick drew nearer to the count ; a conflict of many passions, as indescribable as violent, raged in his bosom ; his eyes for a moment seemed fixed with a ghastly glare on the moon, whose light streamed wanly

on his wild countenance, but they saw nothing ;—the next instant he drew his cowl more completely over his face, and, after clenching his hands tightly, thrust his open right palm within the folds of his large coarse habit,— the loose drapery became agitated with the convulsive movement. By and by he drew his hand forth, and, as he raised it in the air, the cold ray from above glittered upon a naked blade, which he held right against the back of Ragotzy, while with his teeth set, and every limb convulsing with suppressed emotion, he exclaimed, “ With me ? To whom, sir, is it you allude ? Who is the lady ? ”

“ She, whom men call queen. Do you understand me now ? — the daughter, sir, as we are told, of the late King John and the Queen Isabella,” answered the chieftain, with resolved mien and dauntless voice.

Father Dominick approached two steps nearer the daring Cygani, and grinding his teeth against each other, with an accent, low pitched indeed, but as dreadfully emphatic as the dagger’s point which glanced in the moonshine, shrieked in the bandit’s ear, “ Whom, villain, mean you ? ”

“ The Lady Czerina,” answered Ragotzy, firmly : “ if I wed her not”—

“ Murderer, silence ! ” burst in the almost maniac confessor, at the full pitch of his thundering voice. As he spoke, his lips became horridly blanched with the excess of his emotion, and his eyes seemed literally to start from their sockets, “ What, thou ! ” continued the monk in a volley of wrath ; “ thou ! for whom the coarse wanton, serving by indenture the uses of the common hangman, had she the breath and being of humanity not totally defaced, were too good a mate, thou dare to raise thy presumptuous thoughts to her, who is,—the Queen of Hungary ! Hast thou a working pulse, or art thou not the very principle of crime incarnate ? Something of this I was led to suspect from

the unlicensed tenor of your missives,—I feared I might hear that from those perjured lips, which it would become me, in no point of view, to brook or pardon, but I might not guess to what extremity you would be wrought by your disordered senses. Mark me, rash fool!—did I not reckon you drunk, or nigh to death—delirious; by the myriad eyes of the God above us, I'd strike you dumb at my feet!"

" Rail on; it shakes not me, although 'tis pity so much good brawling should be thrown away," returned the iron-nerved chieftain, with coolness, and smiling grimly: "nor, I ween, would you deem it politic to harangue so loudly, were we now, instead of standing on this heath, met in the presence-chamber of Queen Isabella and Cardinal Martinuzzi. His eminence, notwithstanding his weight of character and influence, would find all impotent, I suspect, to hinder justice shaking her strong steel at his trusty confessor Father Dominick. Here, however, you may exclaim in safety, only this build upon: having once taken my stand, were your voice as the Tuscan trumpet,* and a thousand deaths in the blast, the centre of the earth might crack to hear it, but the sound would fall like a child's whistle on my steadfast ear, nor shake one jot my purpose. Tush, sir! I have ventured hither with no fluctuating resolution, on no idle errand; besides I've news for you: the archduke, ere this, I doubt not, has ordered the ambassador Castaldo to head his forces. Charles and the king of France have concluded a truce; so the whole and undistracted attention of his brother is directed hitherward—he is on the way to Coloswar. Solyman, on the other hand, reviews his Timariots† in the White City.‡ The flower of the Ot-

* Κώδωνος ὡς τυρσηνικῆς. See the 17th line of the Ajax of Sophocles, and notes thereon.

† A sort of feudal cavalry, who hold their lands on condition of service.

‡ The White City, i. e. Belgrade.

toman empire is assembled round the unfurled *sandják sheriff*,* the vessel of this state lies tossing to and fro, beneath the dark brows of these Cyanean rocks.† One measure alone can avert Transylvania being crushed in the collision of the mighty potentates. Peter of Moldavia, by command of the sultan, hovers even now in martial array upon the borders. With that waivode I, sir,—I, as the leader of the Cyganis, have formed a federative alliance. Peter, beyond controul of his lord paramount, will only act (as you have cause to know) as suits his interests; those interests, influenced by a Cygani maid, whom I have given him for chamber pastime, are the same as mine. Most of the Wallachian bands, heretofore under the command of Peter are incorporated into one body, and, with the Moldavian force I before spoke of, will march when and where I dictate. Of all the Wallachian chiefs only one acts independently of Peter and myself,—the young Richter Iwan. What that richter's purposes may be, I cannot even guess, only it is certain, that, for the last few months he has been extraordinarily active in recruiting his force,—but that is from the point. Now, without moving a single

* The sacred standard of Mahomet.

† Cyanean rocks.

“ When Argo passed
“ Through Bosphorus, betwixt the justling rocks.”

Milton, Par. Lost, book ii.

The “ Concurrentia Saxa ” of Juvenal. The most elaborate description of these rocks occurs in Apollonius Rhodius. See the Argonautics, book ii. from l. 430 to l. 469. Herodotus has a brief allusion to their floating properties, and Valerius Flaccus mentions,

“ Errantesque per altum
“ Cyaneas.”

See also Lucan, 2. 718. and Ovid. Trist. 1, 9, 47.

These rocks were called Cyanean from their dark colour. The rocks spoken of in the Odyssey, b. xii. v. 61, though somewhat inappropriately styled *πλαγκται*, (an epithet so peculiarly applicable to those at the entrance of the Euxine), would appear to refer to Scylla and Charybdis.

follower of my gang, or bringing to the field a man of our scattered people, but merely by using the powers entrusted to me by the Moldavian waivode, I can command the destinies of Hungary,—ay, the lord regent himself must quail to Alaric Polgar, unless you, sir, find means to induce him to accede to my terms. The waivode of Moldavia shall betray either of these mighty armaments,—which Martinuzzi pleases, into his hands. It is indifferent to the renegade Peter, whether the Cross or the Crescent vail its glory,—with the power that remains, the regent may deal as he thinks fit,—and he is not the man, or I am much mistaken, to let an advantage slip by him. Now to the point,—I require no other guerdon, for preserving for the head of the Lady Czerina the heaven-wrought coronet of Hungary, which yet she hath not in her own custody, nor,—and the bandit smiled mysteriously,—“perhaps ever will have. I merely require, I say, the hand of the Lady Czerina.”

Here the brigand paused, as if waiting an answer. What slight accidents, what hair-breadth scapes make the wires which influence and regulate the machinery of our fate! Once and again, during the above, the monk betrayed an intention to interrupt, but he restrained himself, and towards the conclusion, slowly and unnoticed, he replaced the dagger within the folds of his habit. Little did Count Ragotzy imagine, by how frail a tenure he held his life that hour. After a long pause, in which the monk seemed to muse deeply, he broke silence.

“Is Unna acquainted with your visit to Hermanstadt?” he said,—“with your proposals?”

“No,” replied Ragotzy; “when I resolved on this matter, my mother was absent on one of her usual flitting expeditions.”

“And how, if I do not see cause to accept your exacting conditions? What follows? What am I to look to as the alternative?” demanded the monk.

“I will tell a tale,” said the count; “a tale, that to

Father Dominick were the same as his death warrant; and the Lady Czerina,"—he stopped, and then subjoined in a more low and inward voice—"she may perchance ascend a scaffold in lieu of a throne."

The cheek of the monk grew even more ashy pale for a passing moment, but quickly resumed its previous hue. The expression was succeeded by an indignant and withering glance of the eye: that too passed away; but still there remained some secret inward emotion, as shuddering, he made answer—"Hah? Is it even so? Sometimes Count Ragotzy," he added, after a pause, and his words came couched in a half whisper, whilst a mysterious and boding smile curved his livid lip; "men dream not what they are about, elancing words, which, like the scorpion's arrow, smite their own breasts, and are but little instruments,—yet say," he proceeded in at once a more audible, and more natural key—"say, I were disposed to rely on this you buzz into my head; what warrant have I for your fidelity?"

"Why, in respect of keeping treaty with you," answered Ragotzy, "I pledge my honour."

"Your honour!" repeated the monk, and a scornful smile curled his lip: "See you, Alaric, yon gnarled and stunted pine?" and he directed the attention of his companion to a low tree that had thurst its twisted roots into the rifts and fissures of the rock.

"And what of that?" said the other, suffering his looks to light on the knotty complication.

"Such is your honour," cried the monk; "'tis withered, sir, withered root and branch! Prithee throw something more than mere breath to incline the balance, lest thy pledge kick the beam."

"Well then," replied the chieftain; "say I commit my person into your hands,—to-morrow at noon I will present myself before the council to be held at that hour by the lord regent; and what you shall in the mean time prescribe, will I then publicly deliver. Moreover,

I will offer myself as a hostage for the due fulfilment of every iota I stipulate. Does that content you?"

"Albeit, I am not apt for this to night, we will canvass it hereafter," said Father Dominick abruptly:—"Tis an affair," he presently subjoined, "of too great importance to be suddenly concluded; we can, I say; confer privately another time; however, at present you require repose,—surely it cannot be, you intend remaining without the walls till day-break?"

"You cannot be ignorant," replied the count, after a moment's hesitation; "that time calls for instant decision, and you are not wont to lose the advantage of the game for lack of promptitude. In every way hath fortune armed me, nor will I neglect to use her prevailing weapons. I repeat, in my hands rests the prosperity or downfall of these countries; but I will not barter the precious spell I hold over their destiny, for any price below the hand of the Lady Czerina. Nay, more, you have the present means to marry me also to her condition;—no reflected empire for me! I must and will possess the greatest of the deities, positive regal power;* not borrowed, sir, not borrowed, but that which stands on its proper basis—my own absolute will. This, if you deny me, understand, I shall make small scruple, spite of Unna's mandate contrariwise, to help myself out of your fortunes—and your fame. Touching my accompanying you at this hour to Hermanstadt; if so, shall I be in all respects a free agent?"

"You will not be under *my* surveillance," answered the priest scornfully.

"Nor, I trust, will the wretched curs of office, the *palatini canes*, be allowed to bay at me on account of certain transactions you wot of?" urged the other, bending his dark and penetrating glance on the holy confessor."

"Such be our paction," replied the monk; "a truce,

* τὴν θεῶν μεγίστην ἔχειν τυραννίδα—ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

as to all that's past, shall be observed twixt thee and justice, during your sojourn at Hermanstadt."

"Then I attend you," said the count; and Father Dominick led the way down a narrow and abrupt descent, intermingled and obscured with rock and tangled brushwood, and but partially dappled, and enlightened by the erratic glimmerings of the moon; at the gorge of this rugged defile, a low postern gate, covered with thickly matted ivy, admitted them into a long dark dreary cavern. This eventually led to a stone staircase, terminating in one of the small square towers that studded the wall of the battlement, and which formed a kind of barbacan, whence a narrow door gave them access to the ramparts; but one other observation passed between the monk and his champion, ere they reached the castle.

"Where do you propose to lodge me?" inquired the count.

"In my own suite of apartments," answered the monk.

"The north turret?" rejoined the other.

"I presume you can have no objection to take up with your former quarters?" said Father Dominick.

"None, whatever," replied the Cygani leader, with an air of savage exultation, whilst a fearful radiance, that might be likened to a flickering fire at night-time, lit up his eyes, as for an instant, they gleamed out through the raven locks, with fierce and demoniac joy—"Oh! none whatever!" and at the word, the two passed into the citadel of Hermanstadt.

MANUSCRIPT II.

— Nec mea lusit imago
Irrita nec falsum somnia misit Ebur.

C LAUD.

THE tenor of our tale carries us back to Hubert, who, after having received the packet from Count Ragotzy, forthwith hied him to the esplanade. He thence dismissed to their quarters the *corps de garde*, and rejoined the subaltern on the ramparts. The countenance of the poor fellow had hardly recovered the natural rubric, which the apparition of armed men had so lately chased away. Motioning the soldier of the watch to draw close up to his side, Hubert proceeded to address him in a confidential tone. "How is this, Yosa,* he said, "what terrifies you, man?"

"Why," returned the soldier, "how can flesh and blood help being terrified at having to encounter the occupants of the grave—but Christ save us! egress from the city after dusk is prohibited, and I marvel how the holy father passed without the walls."

"Why you only came to Hermanstadt with our last recruits," returned the other, "else you would have known, that by orders of the regent, the wishes of his confessor are to be obeyed to the letter, by every indivi-

* Yosa; Joseph.

dual in the city. No one knows whence comes this ghostly father ; but men will talk, and there be strange things bruited abroad. The suspicious circumstance of the monk's invariably retaining his cowl so low over his face as to hide his features, has afforded occasion for considerable marvel ; men *do give out*, " and the voice of the speaker sunk into a most oracular whisper, " that he you saw even now, is no better and no other than"—here Hubert paused—"than —— "

" Whom ?" demanded the sentry.

" *The Walking Jew !*" was the reply.

" Now Holy Saint Mary forefend !" ejaculated the other, crossing himself.

" Yea, there be evil tongues that do say as much," rejoined the captain.

" Well, only think of that ! And his eminence to suffer a rascally Jew to order about him in such like fashion—What can be the cause ?"

" 'Tis a perilous question, and one hard to answer, although there are who make small scruple to propagate their thoughts upon that head ; and, in good truth, the only difference of opinion is, as to the extent of the holy father's communication with the foul fiend."

" Is it possible ?" said the sentinel.

" Yea, I have heard it hinted that the reverend gentleman has his own reasons for never discovering his diabolical countenance. You understand, I wis—" the soldier here interposed :

" Now, St. Stephen and the Holy Mother be our defence !" he said ; " and if the man be, as you aver—a minister of evil, peradventure the armed sprites, who awhile since made so formidable a demonstration, were in league with the clovenfooted gentleman—only to think of that ! but Holy Virgin ! what was it, captain, you had the temerity to take charge of ?— did I hear aright ?—a packet, I trow, to deliver to the queen ? The saints preserve us ! to think of you being appointed the go-between

of her Grace and the Evil One ! By'r Lady ! I would not accept the office for the pope's absolution and benizen to boot."

"Even as I suspected," muttered aside the officer. "Yosa," he said aloud, gravely turning to the superstitious sentinel, "I request the favour of you, that you will not, for a few days to come, breathe a syllable of what you have this night witnessed."

"Only to think of that!" returned the soldier; "verily I am more ready to oblige you herein, than you to require my silence. I mean to forget the whole matter, please the saints!"

"Thanks, my friend," said Hubert; "though it is but a brief oblivion, I request of you; be Father Dominick of human mould, or be he commissioned by the Evil One, certes he holds authority in Hermanstadt, and so we were better not publish this night's adventure."

The sentry, assuming the mien of one impressed with the importance of his charge, silently assented, and Hubert and he soon after parted.

The above information had been thrown out by Hubert as a sort of bridle on the man's loquacity, for the following day or two; but the horrors he attributed to Father Dominick were, nevertheless, universally credited in Hermanstadt, at the time our story commences. The research of the historian or the darker industry of the legendary, would in vain attempt to pierce through that atmosphere of moral pestilence, which the dubious, but appalling sensation of terror, appertaining to the very idea of the ghostly father, spread around him.

Excepting the regent, Martinuzzi, and Scipio, a negro, his personal follower, not a soul was known at any time to hold communication with the mysterious confessor. The fact was, that few in Transylvania would have cared for the world's wealth to exchange a syllable with one of so inexplicable a bearing, and respecting whose close identity with the incarnate enemy, such horrid suspicions were

afloat. To every defamatory whisper superstition gave ready currency ; much of what was repeated from mouth to mouth could not be traced, and was, no doubt, mere idle calumny, based upon very slender foundation : a part—refuted by its own absurdity, must have been absolutely false. No tale of terror can be devised which will not find disseminators ready to embellish, with fresh and aggravated tints, the marvel of the narrative.

This, perhaps, may tend to explain many of the accounts of Father Dominick, which, although of a nature far over-wild and improbable for the sober faith of *la raison froide*, for a long period had been rife in Hermanstadt. Yet, should it be objected that all these rumours were void of foundation, we must demur to the motion. Though calumny may amplify, she seldom invents ; even her wildest exaggerations have commonly some ground, however ordinary and accidental, to go upon.

Wherever there is any considerable smoke, it usually indicates a latent fire, however smouldered for a time by the volume of its own exhalation. With the view of elucidating the mystery of this man's existence, we have winnowed out, as it were, from the sterile chaff through which they are scattered, one or two incidents of Father Dominick's life, which will scarcely be deemed foreign to our story. Moreover, these having transpired, subsequent to his arrival in the city, would appear to rest upon better evidence than the generality of those horrible passages, of which common report made him the hero. To this extent we think it necessary to render the reader as wise as were the good people of Hermanstadt; not that we absolutely pledge (as in other points) the white faith of our romantic muse to the dark and mysterious transactions, at which we are about, with fear and trembling, to cast a retrospective glance, (however, inclined ourselves to credit the wild legend,) but because those *speciosa miracula*, might not be omitted, without affecting the even thread of our narrative. The ground we

have chosen, hardly ascends indeed to the level of probability, and trembles, so to speak, under our feet; yet, however singular and obscure these materials of our legendary pen may read, that they should once have been propagated and credited, confirms in the strongest manner the detestable reputation of Father Dominick; nor, in our opinion, ought they to be rejected as apocryphal. We were wrong to withhold our belief from the recital of particulars, because they partake of that wild and mysterious character, which is proper to the era and to the country. Our relation, be it remembered, has been perpetuated by a jealous and uniform tradition, and will be found verified in the local records of that age. We learn then, on referring to a legendary tale of Erdély, (copied from certain MSS. in the Hungarian National Museum, founded by the Graf Széchényi in 1802 in Pesth,) that on Martinuzzi's introducing the holy father to the capital of Transylvania, and appointing him his confessor, he assigned him a noble suite of rooms within the castle. These were held sacred to his use, and that of his sable follower; no other individual ever venturing to cross their threshold. This suite was only separated from the apartments of the regent, by a long oaken hall or gallery, at one extremity of which two of the anti-chambers, common to both, served as a medium of mutual communication. The attendance of the Ethiop was highly conducive to those feelings of awe and mystery, which surrounded the ghostly father. The two were sometimes compared to those ill-omened animals, unto whom the airs of heaven and the blessed sunshine are said to be hateful—neither was often to be met abroad, and never by any accident was the cowl of the monk thrown back from off his head. However, for some months past, to the extreme terror of the garrison, and the evident improvement of its discipline, this mysterious man had nightly promenaded for several hours the ramparts of the city.

One morning, as it is related, shortly after that epoch when

Hermanstadt became the seat of the royal house of Hungary, the ladies Emilka and Antoinette, whose appointed duty it was to attend upon the young queen, entered her bed-chamber, according to custom, to awake her grace, and do the requisite devoirs of her toilet. They were not a little startled to find the room deserted, and their astonishment became unbounded on observing, the royal attire to remain precisely where, on being dismissed over night, they had left it lying upon an ottoman. They concluded, besides, from the state of the maiden's couch, that it had been lain in only for a short period. The bed linen appeared very slightly deranged, and all impression of her delicate limbs was nearly obliterated. The queen-mother was summoned; the palace roused; the whole court thrown into an agony of tumult and alarm—the war of anxious voices resounded on all sides—the tocsin rang out its alarum peal over the city; insurrectionary movements followed—opinion was not slow in fixing on the secret abettor, if not the author of the abduction of the maiden. Rumour fluctuated from conjecture to conjecture as to the how and wherefore, but the lord regent was the centre about which she revolved.

It was clearly his policy *to remove* the heir of the house of Zapola, and the act was exclaimed against, as the cruel precaution of a tyrant, and the practical argument of an usurper. Martinuzzi happened to be absent at the time, on public business. Consternation reigned throughout the day, and sad anxious night closed at length upon the wrath and affright of the inhabitants of Hermanstadt. Soon after the deep dead noon of that night, when stillness the most profound gathered over the fair palace, and its inmates were either sunk in repose, perhaps dreaming of their royal mistress, or else lay awake, wrapt in superstitious grief and terror, on account of her mysterious disappearance,—even at that dread hour, suddenly, one long and horrid cry, like unto that which erst resounded in Egypt on her night of doom, roused every individual

beneath the royal dome—all listened with a fearful foreboding of some dire calamity, and presently the soul-harrowing shriek was repeated. It seemed to issue from the queen's bed-chamber—some few of the terror-stricken hearers rushed thither. A marvel! The royal maid was sitting up in her bed—she had on her night-dress, whose hue was exceeded in whiteness, by the livid and unnatural paleness which possessed every feature. The streaming gold of her dishevelled tresses flowed negligently over her shoulders; a slight tear was visible on her left breast, and streaks of blood stained her pure linen. Her hand was pressed against her forehead, as if endeavouring to recollect what had past, and settle her disordered senses. Her streaming eyes glared widely and inquiringly, with a sort of frantic eagerness, round the apartment. One or two deep sighs succeeded, and she sunk back on the pillow, closing her eyes, as if to shut out some painful images.

Isabella directed all present to withdraw, and the beautiful child was left alone with her mother. “What means this, my love, inquired the queen regent?”

“Thank God, 'tis all a dream,” answered Czerina, raising herself on the couch; “but bless me with a word, do, mother! or else I cannot have screamed myself quite awake.”

“Czerina! my dear child!” said Isabella, with unwonted mildness of accent; for little of that kindly feeling, which commonly animates such close connexion, was hers.

Our heroine put her hands to her eyes, as if to assure herself they were not closed—then suddenly she exclaimed, “Ah, the bandage is removed! Mother, I dreamed I died, and I have in the grave beheld a beauteous vision! but false,—oh, surely false!—I would be crowned, and shortly, though—send to the cardinal: I'll confess to him.”

“Him! whom?”

"Ha! I have hidden the writings from him—shall I tell you their receptacle? It is a coffin whose mouldering planks,—but whisper it not to my guardian, or—oh, God of mercy! let me not go mad—I would be crowned with the sacred diadem of St. Stephen, and shortly—say, am I not queen of Hungary?

"Surely, my love," answered Isabella.

"Ha! can angels speak untruths? Mother, what do you think—I've seen *his* face—his face, I say, and God save me from the remembrance. I must be crowned, and shortly, though—oh Isabella! queen regent of Hungary, you little think what has been transacting—there are things working in Hermanstadt, at which the graves of the mighty dead have rent asunder, and given their shadows up—pray my brain don't crack! Send for the cardinal, do—I would confess."

"My love, his eminence is at Coloswar," answered Isabella.

"Why would you deceive me, lady?—I know better, my guardian is at this hour and minute within these palace-walls, or I still dream."

"Will you speak to Father Dominick?" inquired her mother.

"Speak to whom?" shrieked the maiden.

"Father Dominick," repeated the queen.

Czerina replied not a word, but, covering her face with both her hands, went off into a strong shuddering fit. A considerable time elapsed ere the convulsion subsided; it induced a low nervous fever, which resisted, for a period, all attempts to assuage it, and which did not entirely leave her for many weeks. But nothing could prevail upon our heroine afterwards to open her lips on the mystery of her disappearance. To the most earnest and touching inquiries, she simply and invariably replied, "It was a dreadful dream!—a dreadful dream!" She did not seem to be conscious, that the vision comprehended a revolution of four-and-twenty

hours, or to understand how she could have been absent from her couch for so long a period. And although she commonly manifested a shrinking of the soul, a convulsive kind of terror, whenever this *peculum*, shut up in her own bosom, was hinted at, she yet appeared to look upon it merely as a dream ; and the record on her bosom bore witness to its horror, and attested with a bloody seal the truth of her assertion. This was not all. The city had no sooner been cheered with the glad tidings of the queen's safety, than there was buzzed from ear to ear a wild incredible story, which seemed to bear some inscrutable connexion with the disappearance of her grace, and which produced a gloomy and mysterious impression on the public mind. The sentinel, whose duty it was on that night to keep guard near the precipice, absented himself from his post, and continued to be missing until the morning which followed the queen's reappearance. On the dawn of that day, this man, with a countenance haggard and highly excited, presented himself at one of the flanking towers, which served as a sort of barrack or guard-room, having been enlarged for the residence of Martinuzzi's corps of mercenaries. At first he refused to give any account of himself, or to explain the reason of his absence. However, on his commander threatening to hand him over to the camp-marshall, he offered to confess every thing, provided he was sheltered from the wrath of certain parties, implicated in the relation he had to make. This was acceded to. What follows is nearly a translation from a parchment MS., professing to treat of this mystery. Perhaps, in the opinion of the reader, it may reflect some faint and broken rays of light on the dream and disappearance of the Queen of Hungary. It is given in the sentry's own words : —

“ I had not been long lodged on my post, when, just as the cathedral bell tolled the hour of midnight, my eye caught sight, at some distance, of a gloomy shape,

diffused of dew and ether, so lustrous and transparent, that methought I could discern the outline of the craig through the faint appearance, as through a veil. Gradually the figure darkened into substance, and, with a mode of motion, which resembled gliding rather than walking, descended towards the platform. I resolved within myself not to be taken off my guard, and kept my eye steadfastly fixed upon the strange intruder. The hour was dark ; the moon had not risen ; and, under the scowl of night, the plenitude of vapours was perfectly star-proof. On this account I could not distinctly trace the advance of the figure. It came on nevertheless, and I watched its progress with sensations of awe and terror, for which, at the time, I could assign no reasonable cause, although I am now too well able to account for them. The obscure shape found no obstacle in steep or rock, but glided by the jutting barriers of nature, as if it possessed the power to move in air. At length it lit upon an elevated knoll that overhung the military station where I had been posted. Then the shadowless form made a pause — ay, on the very edge of the giddy height, bending to look down on me. I looked up at it — I could do no more. A clammy dew gathered over and tingled all my flesh ; for I was sure, from the time of night, and the drapery of the shape, that some bloodless *villie*,* ‘at once a virgin and at once a bride,’ who could not rest in her grave, stood glaring at me. I crossed myself, and would have repeated an ave, but my tongue clave to the roof of my mouth ; so I remained gazing at the apparition, as helpless and as purposeless as the new-born babe. The horrible thing stared me into statue. It looked all white — features, raiment, all. After awhile she beckoned me. My ramping heart

* The Villies, according to Magyar superstition, are the ghosts of maiden-brides, who, if they get a young man amongst them by moonlight, incontinently cuddle him to death.

stuck in my throat, as I thought I should have to die of her embrace. She called me, naming me by name ; and bade me, would I hear tidings of a dear relative, to follow her. This relative and I, in our early childhood, were bosom comrades, and I yearned for some intelligence whether he were living or dead ; — for we had been long severed, and he, poor fellow ! has been lately made a wanderer on the face of the earth for my crime ! The spectre, stretching her hand with a motion, which seemed to enjoin my following, passed soundlessly forward. God, in whose hands the secret springs and motives of man's actions are locked up, only knows how it came to pass, that I instinctively obeyed that horrible sign. I hardly believe now, it was my deep anxiety to learn some tidings of my relative, although I deemed at the time, that such must have been my motive. Ah ! surely I deceived myself ; — it was not affection, but supernatual impulse, which urged me on, since Heaven knows, I would have given worlds, had I had them, only to have placed those worlds betwixt me and that shocking thing. I trembled, I shuddered in every limb; my eyes strained themselves to gaze upon the apparition — but I felt myself impelled to follow. A hideous phantasma sat upon my breast ; — I knew it, but I could not jostle it off. I traced the unincumbered spirit through height and depth, over battlement and crag and precipice, I believe by intuition, for I retain a very vague idea of that midnight walk — a spell was on all my faculties. I can only remember stopping ever and anon, for the wier'd thing, as if woven of air, flew over the ground at an amazing rate; and whenever I would rest, the white creature, with more than human eagerness, again would beckon me to advance. At length I came to the yawning mouth of that deep black pit, which sweeps steeply down beneath the foundations of the city. Much that followed is like a dream ; the spectre beguiled me down steep and tortuous passages, rudely hewn in the rock, till I found

myself in a vast sepulchral chamber, the roof sculptured with death's emblems,—brainless sculls, bones, and other revolting relics of mortality, were ranged around, and unnumbered coffins were deposited in marble recesses along the dormitory walls. Here and there, a full length skeleton stood beside his monument; as if, impatient of the tomb, he would anticipate his resurrection; a black iron lamp, suspended from the raftered roof, cast a flaring and ghastly glare, far worse than darkness, upon the dismal abode of death. To all it gleamed upon, however, I but little attended; only one object transfixed my gaze, and she was the unearthly being, who had lured me to the spot. On her all the faculties of my soul rested with undivisible interest. She seated herself upon an ornamental slab, raised about two feet from the basement, whose entablature appeared highly wrought in living sculpture. On the same monument, by her side, rested a coffin; a hideous skeleton lay stretched at her feet; I might not then discern her features, her veil floated over her countenance, and about her form. Thus, like some spectral effigy, she sat immovable for several minutes, I all the time looking on. I would have stirred; I could not. I would have spoken; my tongue forgot its office: I could hardly be said to think. Whilst I yet remained in this state of stupified horror, my ears caught the tinkling of a small bell at no great distance. The vision arose, as if moved by mechanism, and uplifted the lid from the coffin, and then,—oh! to my dying hour, I shall never forget my consternation!—the silent phantom crept back into its hollow tenement, and drew the lid, so as to fasten it on itself. I was now quite alone in the residence of mouldering mortality. I can just recollect an overwhelming desire I felt to escape from the terrors which surrounded me, but that inclination was defeated by the most hopeless impotency of mind and body. In the meantime, my eyes, fixed in mental vacancy, must have drunk in passively the impression of the ghostly shapes

around. The first perception, which I can call to mind, after the disappearance of the spectre, was sufficiently startling. The space beyond the entrance of the vault was sunk in shapeless and impenetrable darkness, and the threshold itself was cast into shadow; but all at once, my sight seemed, as it were, to grasp at something in that direction. The faculties of my mind, floating between vision and consciousness, very slowly became sensible of the fact. Owing to the gloom, I could not at first define what I beheld; but by little and little I came fully to understand, that *my* strained eyes, and the eyes of some dark shape in the door-way, were reciprocally fixed, and glaring on each other. The vacant orb recoiled, as a strange living creature, tall, spare, and fantastically habited, passed through the portal arch: whether it were male or female, I might not at first discriminate. Its epicene countenance was dark, withered, and indented with deep furrows—its shrivelled lanky arms were bare. The dishevelled hair was pendant in matted tresses about the shoulders. In its right hand it extended a staff: it spoke, and its voice sounded harsh and hollow, as from the grave.—“Take up that coffin with care, and follow me.”—For a moment I hesitated, but only for a moment; I seemed to consider myself bound to obey. I raised the coffin; it was heavy; then the foul hag, having reached the lamp down from the ceiling, passed onward with a gesture of lofty invitation. I followed, as if under a charm; we proceeded through a labyrinth of subterraneous passages, ascending and descending frequently flights of steps, sometimes built of hewn stone, in some places chiselled out of the living rock. We traversed dungeons of wild and frightful aspect and of vast extent, wrought out of the heart of the earth. At length a general languishing and faintness of spirits overcame me; I halted to recover myself, and let the coffin rest upon the ground; my unknown guide moved on without a pause, and the assemblage of horrors which environed me were wrapped

in impervious gloom. Reptiles of unnatural and hellish natures congregated round the narrow mansion of the dead. The dismal screech owl, with hideous outcry, fled deeper into the vault; the whizzing bat whistled through my legs; and rats and mice, and such abhorred and unimaginable creatures, as are never heard of in the upper world, crawled about me in every direction; so I thought I would abide no longer in that spot of loathsomeness. I essayed again, to uplift my allotted burden, when, in the very act of squeezing unwittingly in my hand some horrible abortion, which had nestled itself beside the coffin, the disjointed prison-house burst asunder, and the incarnate spirit of its single inhabitant, stood redeemed and disenthralled, rending the casements of death, and robbing the grave of its victory. I could not *see* the apparition, the darkness was too profound; but, by that unutterable creeping of the flesh when every pore, tingling with distinct vitality, attests the vicinage of the dead, I *felt* its presence, and knew it was at that instant standing at my elbow. I would not stretch my arm, lest I should touch its winding-sheet, the very thought of which palsied me with terror. Presently a gleam of light, that shot from an opposite direction, partially illumined the dungeon. I was mad enough several times to cast a furtive glance on the apparition. She was the spectre of the precipice. Her veil, like a thin mist, must have melted away, and I looked upon a loveliness "not of this world." There, pale in immortal beauty, stood the moveless form, fixing the intense and supernatural light of her eyes upon me. Gradually, like the removal of one layer of the thinnest gossamer after another, methought I recollect who she was that stood beside me. Father of heaven! how did I ever survive the shock of that moment? 'Twas the same lady, whom, several years ago, in the forest of Belivar, I basely caused" * * * *

[Here there occurs a break in the manuscript, and it is from other sources we derive an account of the inter-

ruption which ensued.]—It appears that at this moment the word *remember*, enunciated in a voice, hollow and sepulchral as that which might have served an inhabitant of the grave, sounded from the midst of the bystanders. There followed an awful silence of several seconds. Then succeeded a deal of implication on one side, and recrimination on the other; but, in the end, all present were fain to admit the inexplicable fact, that the word had not been voiced by any individual in company; it issued indeed, from “amongst them, but it was not of them.” A sound without an agent. *Vox et præterea nihil.* The speech of the sentry faltered, his limbs shook, and his tongue seemed to refuse his office, so that the further hearing was necessarily adjourned. In the meantime, these mysterious particulars, having been rumoured abroad, everywhere created a certain chill and superstitious sensation. On resuming his communication the following day, the sentry perceived that the room was filled to crowding, and many of the conclave were citizens of no little consequence.

At this point we again take up the manuscript. “My recognition of the spectre so greatly shocked me,” recommenced the sentinel, “that I sunk down in a state of insensibility. On reviving, I gazed fearfully around, under the apprehension of having my eyes blasted with that unearthly presentment; but, in her place, they lit on the ghastly form of one, whom I had reason to think an abhorred ghost from the regions of the damned; of one, whom, next to the Evil One himself, I apprehend, being like him, subtle, terrible and bloody. With horror quivering in every nerve, I gazed for a moment in doubt, but I could not be mistaken—I saw it was the same. My heart is full, and I must speak out. I threw myself upon the justice of his highness, whose beams are universal as the sun’s, whose goodness is an attribute co-ordinate with his power. I appeal boldly to the laws of Hungary, and the justice of my country shall shield me; I will bid defiance to this man’s terrible menaces.

Countrymen and comrades ! He, whom I awoke from senselessness to look upon, was One, whom for years, until that frightful moment, I had not encountered, and whom, as I said, I believed to be no more. Till within the last six months his scenters of human prey kept me continually in view, and I duly received, at the hands of one of these, fifty imperials, every quarter, to insure my silence, and my remaining in Wallachia. The discontinuance of that supply persuaded me of his death. But, ah ! it was he, who yesterday snapped the thread of my relation by the sound of his well-remembered voice,—even the same who would have defended me from evermore revisiting this country ; who has sworn I should not long survive the hour I set my foot on my native spil,—the same, who once drew from me a tremendous vow not to reveal to a single—— Ha ! great God ! Friends, rally round me ! Look ! there glares the visage of the living traitor !—there ! there !”

As the prisoner thus spoke, he would have singled out, with unsteady finger, some one at the extremity of the chamber, and there ensued a general stir and commotion of the compact mass which fronted him. From the eagerness common to all, not to omit a syllable of the “ghost story,” the conclave of citizens had wedged themselves in close and silent array contiguous to the narrator. Those nearest found their ranks invaded, and themselves urged forward, by persons immediately behind, and such as were left in the rear, perhaps from having arrived too late, jostled hard for room, trusting, in their turn, by dint of sundry elbowings and manœuvres, in some sort to better their situation ; so that, notwithstanding the dense and crowded state of the apartment, this concurrent and impatient pressure towards one point, as to a common goal, soon left a vacant space betwixt the extreme rank and the wainscoat. It was thither the prisoner had pointed ; but in the general erment, the individual indicated by the gesture,

effected his retreat, without being discovered. Again, with silence and suppressed breath, the assemblage gathered round the sentry. [We return to the manuscript.]

"In a niche of the dark cloister," proceeded the narrator, in a lowered voice, "a darkened lamp had been posited, that threw the corner of the dungeon, where I had sunk down, into a deepness of shade so great, as to render me almost completely invisible. The man, I mentioned, was standing near the entrance. His coarse monastic raiment was belted in by a rope, to which was suspended a large leaden crucifix; the cowl having been thrown back, displayed the monkish tonsure. In a low tone, this person communed with himself—'Strange!' he murmured, 'I trust there has been no error—Unna, where art thou?'

"What would you with her, you name?" demanded some one, in a deep guttural voice, which, in spite of its harshness, bore the accents of a female; and at the word, the same uncouth being, who had impelled me to convey the coffin from the cemetery, stalked back, repeating in, as I thought, a fierce and commanding tone,—"What would you with Unna?" Her tangled hair hung around her in elfin locks, and her manner and appearance might have suggested the visible presence of Hecate, in the act of inspiration.

"Have you secured the child?" demanded the monk.

"The child!" echoed the other, "Oh! ay, the dainty marigold; I had her fast but now, close and pent up, like death; her kingdom is a goodly heritage; yet, for all her spacious realm, a small continent will hold her; she's robed in pall, but not of sceptered purple. My eyes," proceeded the speaker, after a pause, with deep pathos of tone, "whose melting source, seamed with so many years of hard obstruction, hath been a niggard to my outcast state, when they beheld her laid in her narrow bourne, looking so pure and pale, wept for her, and, in the bitterness of my soul, I said, wherefore should I weep? better

thus, poor thing ! were thy sleep to wake in heaven—better thus, than quaff the fatal inheritance, I have provided thee—oh ! far better thus, than live on in gorgeous deceit. Methinks I'd rather see thee in thy shroud, than in thy golden state. I'd rather, thou wert mouldering in an untimely grave than seated on that throne.'

"‘Why these reflections now ? they come too late — there was a time indeed,’ said the monk ; ‘but where have you hid the child ?’

"‘You say true, they come too late,’ replied Unna ; ‘but that sweet flower, I feel, will fade or ere it blossom.’

"‘Cease, raven-voiced fatalist, unless you would have me mad !’ exclaimed the monk. ‘Why, ever since that day, have you rung your boding in my ear ?—widow of Thomas Polgar, was it not your doing ?’

"‘Yes, I glory in it, and that child shall not lose a foot of possible empire, either through my madness, or thy faintheartedness. Thou didst spare the babe against my wish, and I well know thy pitiful nature ; but, remember, whenever thou art about to draw destruction on thy head, by promulgling this matter, whom thou wilt involve in thine own ruin — Beatrice and me, and her. Let the child reign in peace. Her sceptre will be a frail reed in a fraailer hand ; and will break at the instant it is exerted,’ said the monk.

"‘But thy arm shall instruct her how to wield it,’ replied Unna, ‘and why should she not govern in right of her father ?’

"‘That which you have done, I cannot undo,’ rejoined the monk, evasively, ‘and if I might, it would now answer no good purpose ; you have heard of Count Rodna’s murder, and know the dreadful consequence of that fatal tragedy. It is now too late. Alicia Swartz, too, is in heaven !’ and, having thus spoken, the monk groaned audibly.

"‘What ! if *he* were there with her ?’ demanded Unna.

"‘No, no ;’ rejoined the monk, ‘I do not like thy

thought ; I would not hurt a hair of that injured head even to benefit *her*. His appearance has a savour of bitterness unto me, even as a guilty conscience, to remind me ! No more, Unna !' he presently added, 'my apprehensions point elsewhere.'

" 'To whom ?' said Unna.

" 'The brigand !' answered the monk.

" 'Alas ! I trust otherwise,' said Unna, in a broken voice : 'I trust otherwise.'

" 'His swoln audacity, that makes him fancy all things within his fathom, will be his ruin,' rejoined the monk. 'His violent humours border on insanity, towards which restraint and fetters may be kindness ; any longer continuance of his insults and menace, in regard to that matter, must relax the sinews of authority ; and, if they do not speedily terminate, by the Lord that lives ! I will proclaim him for that he is !'

" 'What would you, tyrant ?' shrieked Unna.

" 'Call upon Authority to wield her sword to cut the offender off,' replied the monk, with solemn energy.

" 'Then may the malisons of his mother overtake you !' quickly rejoined Unna. 'May they—and curses such as mine will go direct to heaven, and have a supernatural potency—may they overtake, and cling, and cling unto you, and drag you down to hell !'

" The tall harsh form of the speaker grew taller, while venting this imprecation, and her dark features bore an imprint, corresponding to its dreadful purport.

" 'Nay, nay,' returned the monk, suddenly lowering his tone to one more soothing, 'it may not come to death. You should remember, I have higher obligations, and ties, which are more binding, and to which I must sacrifice those, which would otherwise lead me, for thy sake, to overlook the brigand's preposterous insolence,—make him understand this, or, else,—the Titan must be chained.'

" Unna preserved a gloomy silence, and the monk shortly

added, ‘ But you have not told me where the child is deposited ; and the princess, where is she ? ’

“ ‘ Where should she be ? ’ retorted the other ; ‘ because your infatuation forced me to convey her hither, should I detain her in these pestiferous receptacles of putrid humanity, the resort of spirits foul and fallen ? — Does she bear about with her a spell, think you, against the viper’s sting, or is she ague-proof ? ’

“ ‘ I meant it not so,’ answered the monk.

“ Unna again spoke. ‘ Whither, I wonder, can that craven have strayed in the secret dark ? We had better hence, or she, you love, may be engulfed in one of those steep and deep abysses, which recede into the bowels of the earth ; or else, entangled in the whirling-pool, float on a watery bier.’

“ ‘ Ah ! ’ shrieked the monk, ‘ what madness is this ? — Lead me, lest her innocent foot be already on the thresh-hold next to heaven.’

“ At that moment, a strong light flashed into the vault, and a white robe was seen fluttering, in the further extremity of the same passage, by which I had entered. An iron tread echoes the light foot-fall which precedes it. The monk stood mute and motionless, but Unna rushed out of the vault. There followed a faint scream, immediately succeeded by a clangous sound, as if one in armour were suddenly stretched upon the earth, and a figure, like that of an angel, came wandering by, with dishevelled hair, and an apparent want of consciousness. It was the spirit of the cemetery, but her shroud was gone, and her clothing, torn and disordered in her flight, hung from her, as it were, in irregular festoons, exposing her person to the exhalations of the vault. The pale thing laid her small palm upon her bosom, ‘ and glancing shadows of the night played o’er the marmoreal depth,’ whence flowed the red blood, staining her scanty raiment. As the monk advanced, the ethereal shape uttered one piercing shriek, and fled forward into the gloom

beyond. The ecclesiastic, pushing past Unna as she entered, with a hasty movement, seized the lamp; and the next instant I again found myself in darkness and solitude. I arose with difficulty, for my limbs were rigid, and an icy chillness benumbed my blood; while shaking off the multitudinous abominations, which hung about me, like the tresses of the gorgon, I began to dread having to linger out in those mephitic vaults my short remnant of existence, with no prospect but to sleep with the slime of toads, and feel, as the chill blank of an eternal rest crept over me, the battening worm raven on his horrid banquet, ere my heart's blood ceased to beat. The idea was fraught with madness, yet it served to renew the elasticity of my mind. I roused myself, and groping along the gelid walls, passed through the entrance. Dismissing every idea, but that of pressing onward, I made my way slowly betwixt the two stone limits, which, at either side, I might easily reach at arm's length. Me-thought I discovered afar off a pale glow-worm light; thither I bent my steps, but as fast as I approached, it appeared to me to recede. At length, on passing through a narrow door-way, the light waxed fainter and fainter, until its last luminous speck had disappeared. I had already remained a minute without attempting to stir a limb from the position, in which I had first halted, when my ears were startled by a soft step, that sounded not far distant. I feared, I might be in the vicinity of the same pale phantom, who seduced me from my post, to visit the territory of her bodiless associates. The step approached, and in a second or two more, a slight tap on my shoulder almost assimilated me to the exanimate thing, I dreaded. Half distrusting even my senses, I have no words to depict my extreme horror, when I felt the icy finger of a corpse laid on the stiff and rigid hand, which hung by my side; I snatched it away from the unnatural touch. For awhile, I could feel my very hair bristling on my head. Soon, I heard the same soft step gradually recede

on the ear, and to my inexpressible relief, the last faint echo of the awful tread presently ceased. So soon as my powerlessness of nerve permitted, I almost questioned the reality of my impression, but again certain remembrances struck upon my heart. I recalled the features of the spectre, and my feeble flickerings of courage wholly died away within me. At this moment, my attention was arrested, by the approach of some person with a light, the gleam of which enabled me to discover, that I was in the same cemetery, from whence I had first borne the coffin, at the behest of Unna. I had hardly time to slink behind the ample base of a mausoleum, when a man in armour entered. His stature was tall, and port commanding, black plumes nodded from his helmet, his visor was down. Drawing forth a small bugle-horn from his side, he blew a low blast. As the last note died in the echo of those arched and sinuous passages, a body of men, armed with long swords and carabines, rushed tumultuously into the cemetery, through a narrow door, sunk within the hollow of the wall, and almost concealed from observation, by the heaps of death's heads, and other emblems of mortality, that seemed purposely to have been arranged about its threshold. The mailed chieftain advancing, formed a prominent figure, in front of this deep back-ground of spears and carabines. ‘We will pay these vaults a visit to-morrow,’ he said, ‘when that black devil, Scipio, shall not so easily escape our steel; so get ye gone from Hermanstadt at present, and wait for me at St. Agatha. I will not tarry long.’

“ ‘Had I my will, count, I’d have this night fixed with a rubrick in the calendar,’ observed one of the men, ‘to commemorate your ill success, ’tis such a rarity.’

“ ‘Wurmser, where have you left Wolf?’ asked the chief.

“ ‘We fear the dog has given us the slip; he bore our lamp away too,’ answered Wurmser.

“ ‘Well, do not attempt to seek him now,’ said the

chieftain ; ‘the beast will be nothing the worse for a night among these cloisters. But are ye all deaf? Am I to bid you gone twice?’ he suddenly demanded, stamping with his armed heel, till the vault echoed and re-echoed to the sound. The troop made a precipitate retreat, and, with a loud clattering noise, closed the door after them. At the same instant, that terrible man approached from the opposite side of the sepulchre. He walked direct up to the chieftain, who appeared to anticipate that his business concerned himself.

“‘My lord,’ began the monk, with an air of stern reproof, ‘this last outrage of all laws, human and divine, calls for exemplary comment. Why should I not this instant give you up to justice? — misguided miscreant, wherefore not?’

“‘Ha! Is justice then, whom thou hast so long thyself abused, become thy dull accomplice?’ calmly retorted the other. ‘Give *me* up to justice indeed! Ha! ha! ha! What hinders rather that I instruct not justice in *thy* reaching crimes? What bids me withhold my tale of wonder, from the multitude? Give *me* up to justice! Why what doth debar me at once claiming thanks and honours, due to the benefactor of my country? Might I not whisper in Isabella’s ear? or might I not, before assembled crowds, where, seated on the very throne of justice, Martinuzzi sits, trumpet thy guilt? Give *me* up to justice!’

“‘You mistake, sir,’ said the monk composedly; ‘there are a thousand ways open to me, without myself appearing in the matter. I have other terrible modes you little dream of, to put a final period to your iniquitous proceedings: drive me not to resort to them. There be emergencies, when right must be enforced by might,—such things have been ere now.’

“‘They have,’ returned the chieftain significantly.

“‘And may again, sir,’ proceeded the monk, sternly.

" 'And may again, as you say,' reiterated the other, with similar emphatic earnestness.

" 'Oh my son!' said the monk, with deep pathos, 'have I not been all the world to you, the almoner, monitor, father? More liberal than the winds? What under heaven is thine, and precious, of health or wealth, of life or liberty, which I built not up in thee? How if I resume these gifts? How, sir, if I *pash* and crumble my own creation, as with a touch I might, to its original atoms? I have borne and forborne long,—do not compel me to vindicate my tardy justice, or else your life,—but do not, do not, do not!'

" 'I tell you,' replied the chieftain, 'you cannot reach me. I defy your utmost malice:—my mother has foretold to me, that only one man will ever have power, for life or death, over Alaric Polgar.'

" 'What man?' said the monk.

" 'Tis a riddle of Dame Unna,' replied the chieftain with a laugh, 'which you may read if you can.—Him should I avoid, says Unna, whom I shall have deprived of his two dearest rights, before he knew they were his property. My life you see is charmed. Mention some other mode of retribution, and I'll believe you.'

" 'Suppose I were to hand you over to the inquisition?' said the monk.

" 'I understand,' returned the other; 'but yours, let me warn you, might prove a two-edged instrument, and cut both ways.—Say I played booty, and confessed more than the rack would have to answer for—more than exactly suited Father Dominick.—What think you, in such a case?—Besides, I can appeal to the safeguard given to Count Thomas Polgar, by the bishop of Funfkirchen, and ratified by Ladislas,—on his death, by King Lewis—when he fell, by Zapola, for some years,—and lastly, ay, you may well start!—by Martinuzzi.'

" 'Son,' replied the monk, after a short pause, 'not-

withstanding the safeguard you speak of, were I to lodge you in prison, and you to linger there till the day of doom, none would heed—none would require the person of your countship at my hands.'

" 'Yes, one would,' coolly observed the chieftain.

" 'Ha ! whom ?' demanded the monk.

" 'The queen of the Cyganis,' replied the other, in the same bold unsubdued tone, which he had hitherto used.

" There followed a momentary pause, which was broken by the monk saying, ' Let me recal, my son, an event in your early history, which seems, I know not how, to have escaped your remembrance. Twenty years, and more have passed over your head, since the day I would advert to, but it is from that epoch, you have to date the commencement of your fortunes. It was then, that your pale light first twinkled on the verge of the horizon, which, gradually broadening and brightening through darkness and storm, hath long hung like 'a hostile prodigy,'* to fright the under world ; but thy fires, which already are almost spent, will have, at the last, to be raked up, like a sparkle, and be trod out by justice.' His voice faltered for an instant. The chieftain would have spoken, but the monk immediately resumed, in a studiously modulated tone ; ' It chanced in Belgrade, even at the time I have named, that a fine boy of the age of ten years, was being led one morning to execution by a body of Janissaries, when a stranger, who happened to be passing through the city, won, it may be, by the youth's gallant bearing, felt interested for his fate. This stranger became solicitous to learn, what crime, deserving death, could have been committed, by so juvenile an offender. He was informed, that the lad was one of a tribe of gipsies, who, on the over-night, had broken into the dwelling of the Mufti, and stripped the house of valuables to a considerable amount. This boy alone had been captured ; he had been offered a

* *λαῖον τέρπας*—The sphinx.

pardon, on condition of his betraying the haunt of his confederates, but preferred to die.—The stranger could not sufficiently admire the magnanimity of the lad,* and he determined to save him. Fearlessly encountering, and surmounting every obstacle, arising from the forms of justice, the prejudices of national antipathy and of religious hatred, he was eventually so happy, as to accomplish his purpose ; but it could only be effected by reimbursing the Mufti for the loss of his property, and afterwards buying the freedom of the culprit, at an amazing price. The sum required was equal to the revenue of a prince, but the stranger counted out the gold in one scale, and in the other reckoned the excellency of a human life ; nay, as he trusted, of a human soul saved, and the ingots were as dust in the balance. Now, tell me, sir, should not this redemption of his existence have insured the urchin's gratitude, whilst he continued to breathe the vital air ? Would one suppose it to be in human nature, that this boy could ever thereafter have done his utmost to injure and trample on his benefactor ?”

“ ‘ You strangely forget yourself,’ said the chieftain, in a scornful, but meaning voice, at the same time drawing himself up into an attitude of insolent defiance ; ‘ I have not hitherto done my utmost.’

“ ‘ Peace, sir,’ exclaimed the monk, ‘ and listen to me, throughout, though not to a close ; for as yet, the end is not—’tis in the womb of time. The stranger took home with him the manumised boy, whom he had snatched, soul and body, as a ‘ brand from the burning.’ His heart inclined towards him, and he clothed him, fed him, instructed him, lavished on him all the charities of father, friend, preceptor, thus ‘ heaping coals of fire on his head,’ should he turn ingrate. He *did* turn ingrate, sir, and all

* “A ruffian, who, rather than betray his associates, is content to endure death, has certainly some principle of virtue, however he may misapply it.”—Lord Shaftesbury, Charact. vol. 2. p. 39.

these benefits were writ in water.—Ah ! *you* had of *me*, Ragotzy, health, wealth, distinction,—all you could have—all that ranks you higher than deserving men. But thou must come, forsooth, a base malignant spy. Like the poisonous worm was stirred thy venom, only to corrode the breast of pity and compassion, which warmed and nestled thee, till by thy diffused malignity, the very hand, which has been so prodigal in its gifts, withered and shrunk. With a felon's strength, didst thou rend the lips of caskets, dread, like those, which lock the end of all our deepest counsels.

“ ‘Unthankful man !’ proceeded the monk, advancing a step nearer to the chieftain, and speaking in a sterner tone : “ Thou peerest into the corners of my life, and didst extort the treasures of my secret soul,—yea, count, one by one, my inmost thoughts before thee, as since thou hast told out the accursed coin, with which I have foolishly requited thee. It had been a mercy hadst thou cut thy way direct into my heart, with a quick steel, so I had perished once, and felt not death dropping for ever from thy perjured lips. What tempted thee ? ”

“ The other mystically smiled and began : ‘ The sultan,’ but immediately the monk again took up the word, ‘ Oh ! he should have heard your tidings, and seen your pilfered treasure; for he commanded,—bribed thee. *I* bid the most, and yet the *serpent* knew thy value ; thou art nothing worth, sir ! what security could he repose in thee ? in a servant, who had broken the full confidence of his lord—in a subject, who set to sale his country’s hopes—in a man, whose dear integrity and common nature were worn, like a robe, to rags ! Is it not vile ? ’

There was uncommon dignity in the bearing of the monk, during the delivery of this stern rebuke ; but it seemed to make no impression on the chieftain.

“ ‘ I have done all this of course,’ he returned with a sarcastic smile ; ‘ you’ve said as much before.’

“ ‘ And you,’ replied the holy father, ‘ heard me without

a blush, as now I see you do. Yet, all this,' he continued, 'I would have pardoned—all, any thing, every thing, but thy last act ! there wanted it not, God knows, to complete the climax of your ingratitude, and yet it transcends the amount of your other injuries a thousand-fold—to aim at a life, to whose term that of thy benefactor is truly linked as closely, as was ever feigned of Meleagar and the billet of Alhea ! What devil prompted thee ?'—He paused, fixing on the chieftain a grave and searching glance.—His companion laughed out scornfully, and the echoing sounds rang through the sepulchres, like the scoffing of a demon.

" 'Thou wert not sane,' the monk rejoined, in a stern and sustained tone of reprimand, majestic beyond description ; ' or, however steel'd thy heart, it is still human. Yes, sir, 'twas stark staring madness possessed you ! But even now, wherefore led you, your wretched myrmidons into these vaults ? I know, you were about to slip the leash,—where, sir, was the quarry ?'

" 'That black traitor,' began the chief.

" 'And what of him, sir?' interrupted the monk ; 'what possible (see you that skeleton standing at your side ? you'll one day be as it, Alarie !) inducement can you have to stain your soul with that man's murder ? Speak, sir!'—At this instant my eyes were attracted by a sight, which again filled them with horror. From that monumental slab, on which the coffin had been originally laid, a female head, and then her entire shape, seemed slowly to issue, ascending as it were, out of the marble. She was sheeted in the unsullied garments of the grave, and her veil of thin gauze in many a fold, like fleecy clouds, floated about her. Trembling, I watched the progress of the vision; at first I doubted, but it was only for a moment. Oh, merciful Heaven ! I soon felt she was,—yes ! the spectre of the precipice stood revealed before me ! At the same time, the observation of Ragotzy and of the monk became rivetted on the awful appearance. A bitter sneer had escaped the lips of the former ; and he

seemed to be meditating on some reply, when the inarticulate sound died away on his tongue, probably from apprehension.

"The spectre beckoned the ghostly father :—to the best of my belief that mysterious man advanced a step towards her, though I may not state this for certain, since to my increased dismay, the light of the lamp became suddenly extinguished, and all the surrounding horrible objects were plunged in their native gloom,—the darkness which was of the tomb—the shadow of death. At that instant a dreadful noise, like thunder, to which many a subterraneous echo answered, resounded through the vault: a door opened, and was shut with violence. 'Be on your guard!' exclaimed a voice near me, which, issuing suddenly from some one of the tombs around, sounded in my ears supernaturally tremendous. 'An intruder lurks in the sepulchre! Over my chamber: at the back of the cenotaph of John Zapola, king of Hungary and Transylvania.' At that instant, a heavy blow prostrated me, and, between fear and stupefaction, the powers of life were for a time suspended.

On awaking to sensation, I found myself in a vaulted apartment, barricadoed with jealous strength. The door was secured without, and the loop-holes, through which already the first faint streaks of coming light began to peep, were held by stanchions of iron. Oppressed with fetters, which scarce permitted me to stir, I made a vain effort to shuffle up and down the room, but soon desisting, I threw myself in despair upon the stone floor of my prison. Towards the close of day I heard the bolts revolve, and one bearing the garb and hue of an African, presented himself, laden with a basket, containing some provisions, and a cruise of water. I inquired of him the cause of my imprisonment; he regarded me for a moment with a scrutinizing eye, and then abruptly named me by an appellation, which, although mine by right, I had not gone by since my boyhood. Before I could recover from my

extreme astonishment, he had vanished, and I heard him carefully shoot the bolts on the outside. Exhausted and hopeless, I soon forgot my sorrows in the land of dreams. My sleep was broken by a heavy hand pressed upon my shoulder; I raised myself: the dusky grey of dawn had again succeeded to the darkness. ‘Bestir thee, thou sluggish clod! wouldst batten on thy duresse, that thou liest here at thy ease, and slumberest away from sorrow?’ said a man, who was standing over me, in a harsh and sullen tone. He was short in stature, but his form was enveloped in a military cloak, and a mask effectually concealed his visage. While speaking, he had knocked off my shackles, and then added—‘Come with me; tread lightly, and not a word, as thou valuest thy life.’ He then drew open a sliding panel of the wainscot, which cavity a man might with difficulty pass. On issuing forth, we stood on the landing of a flight of steep spiral stone steps, which wound, with one descent, until they terminated in a confined and dilapidated chamber. Having, with labouring speed, arrived so far, I could discover no mode of egress, until my guide suddenly opened a narrow iron-clenched postern to the right, which had at first eluded my eye; and at the same time, by accident I believe, the mask dropped from his face, and the red light streaming on his countenance, I beheld the identical agent, who for years had hovered about my goings, and was used to bring me the quarterly payments from his employer. But even at that instant, ere I was aware of his intention, he thrust me out of the room, and incontinently shut the postern upon me. I found myself standing at the base of the north tower, in the court-yard of the citadel. As soon as I recovered from my surprise, at the extrusion to which I had been so abruptly subjected, I directed my steps hitherward, where I was immediately put under arrest. I have nothing more to say.”—

[The manuscript in this place enters on a long metaphysical disquisition concerning the above legend, and

incidentally alludes to a varying tradition, readily credited by the vulgar of every rank, that for more than a century, subsequent to the period prescribed to our story, two spirits, the one in monkish habiliments, and the other a female, all arrayed in white, with her breast dripping gore, would, during the deep and silence of the night, traverse, hand in hand, a certain suite of rooms in the castle of Hermanstadt. But since such a scope of episode would divert us too long from the proper subject of our labours, with which it hath little legitimate connection, we shall forthwith proceed with our narrative.]

We are given to understand then, in a rare work to be met with in the library of the museum at Hermanstadt, which, by the way, contains many scarce and valuable volumes, bequeathed by Baron Brukenthal to his countrymen; that the account of the sentry wrought a terrible impression on the minds of his hearers. And what abundant excuse it furnished for sudden and strong excitement! Rumour forthwith found plenty to do for her hundred several tongues, and every tongue made a separate report. In the streets, on the ramparts, in the near neighbourhood of the citadel,—every where, groups of citizens might be seen collected with eager looks, exchanging the various versions of the mystery. And every mouth, syllabbling the awful sound in a half-whisper, was big with the name of Father Dominick. Some said, the African could be no other than the dreaded black of the citadel. There was a spell in the idea,—no one knew who first dared give it breath; none might guess whence the whisper arose: but, once disseminated, the transition was easy to the crimination of the confessor of their regent,—that mysterious being, around whom already there were darkening suspicions of the most unhallowed description.

At length, a deputation of the principal inhabitants waited upon Martinuzzi, and after recounting the marvellous incidents of the sentry's relation, petitioned his emi-

nence to silence the terrible conjectures, that were rife in Hermanstadt, by deigning to institute some inquiry into the inexplicable occurrence.

The regent's ready consent was obtained. He appointed the party to be brought before him on the following day, and the better to ensure the ends of justice, orders were given, that, in the interim, the sentinel should be confined to the keep of Hermanstadt. The intense sensation which this extraordinary affair produced was wholly unprecedented ; and, impelled by the blind credulity of superstitious fear, the inhabitants of Hermanstadt were stirring betimes on the next eventful morning. At the tenth hour, Martinuzzi appeared, with extraordinary pomp, in the great hall of the citadel, and attended by his principal officers of state, took his seat upon the throne. And now the regent dispatched a serjeant-at-arms, with an order to the warder to produce his prisoner.

A mute and solemn agitation gradually pervaded the chamber as, one after another, growing pale at the idea of the investigation which impended, dropped the conversation, he was holding with his neighbour. The minds of men were wrought upon in the awful silence that succeeded, until their very lives seemed bound up, in the intense expectancy of the current hour. To use the emphatic quotation of one who was present : * “neque populi aut plebis, ulla vox non tumultus non quies ;” and he might well have gone on from the same author, “quale magni metus silentium est !”† Some delay arose. A gentleman usher of his eminence was, at first, dispatched to hasten the attendance of the sentry. Soon after, the Graf Bathori, a young page of rank and note, left the hall on a similar errand. A considerable space of time again elapsed, but neither returned to render an account of his mission ; minute after minute rolled on, while the court was still held in a state of intolerable ex-

* Jerome Lascus.

† Tacitus.

citement and solicitude. At length, a peremptory mandate of Martinuzzi elicited the overwhelming and well-nigh incredible truth. Bathori returned, with perplexity and discomposure in his countenance, accompanied by the warder, who, in great trepidation, informed the regent that the prisoner had escaped. This intelligence came like a thunder-clap upon the senses of every soul in the court. For awhile, they refused to yield credence to so astonishing a statement, but it was too true; the door, it seems, had not been forced; neither bolts were shotten, nor bars withdrawn; every safeguard remained in the morning, as it had been left overnight. The prison was secure and unassailed, but where was the prisoner? Each man's heart throbbed a reply, according as superstition or doubt predominated; but, on every bosom, a strange, and hardly-defined sentiment of terror and dismay weighed, like an incubus. The idea of carrying on the investigation being of course abandoned, the crowd dispersed to their several homes.

Days grew to weeks, and weeks were numbered into months; and each hour, as it passed, stole something from the intensity of the general horror, when a fresh incident helped to renew the public excitement, and revived the remembrance, which seemed ready to expire, of the mysterious goings on in the vaults of Hermanstadt.

A patrol of the city, happening, one day, to return home by an unfrequented path, discovered the corpse of a man lying in the fossé, just without the ramparts. He caused the dead body to be conveyed to the barrier, hard by—it was perfectly putrid; no lineaments of his face were discernible. A noose, with the rope attached, was left about the neck. The arms were lifted: the hands clenched; and the whole corpse stiffened in one dreadful expression of agony. All seemed to indicate, that he had come by his death unfairly; but, Gracious Heaven! the deceased was habited in the uniform of the Hungarian guard. Could it be possible? Ha! vengeance had kept

his word, and done his worst ! The unsightly spectacle could be nothing else, than the foul and festering carcase of the sentry, who was supposed to have escaped from the keep, and who had never since been heard of. A placard, found upon his person, put the fact beyond all question. It bore the inscription which follows :—
“ Citizens of Hermanstadt ! behold the catastrophe of that desperate slave, that canker-worm of faith ! take warning by his fate. I, and one greater than I, have our eyes on every soul of ye. Whosoever loves his life will keep his own counsel. Signed, SCIPIO.”

We leave the reader to conceive the dismay, which sat drooping, like an icicle, upon the spirits of all who came to hear of this billet, each of whom might have exclaimed, with Eve —

———— “ me damp horror chill'd
At such bold words, vouch'd with a deed so bold.” *

* Milton.

MANUSCRIPT III.

"The clock points the hour ; and man is yet as virtuous as our first progenitor before the fall ; the clock strikes, and all is over."—**GODWIN.**

" *Somnia, terroris magicas miracula, sagas
Nocturnos lemures, portentaque.*"

HORACE.

THE mind would fain pause, amidst the supernatural incidents of the last chapter, with a longing desire to ascertain their hidden springs and causes ; but, for the present, at least, we must revert to the main subject of our history, to the elucidation of which the foregoing account of the sentry is by no means unessential. We wished, moreover, before we proceeded further, to show how Father Dominick came to be held in so repulsive a light ; and with that view, have quoted one, amongst many, strange stories, to which we have had access, and which were current at the period. We have been guided in our selection, chiefly by the superior weight of evidence, which seemed to attach to the tale of the cemetery. Had we desired merely to excite terror, we had the choice of several very remarkable passages of the ghostly father's life, and reappearance after death, any one of which were, perhaps, preferable, as a specimen of the marvellous. But we would not attempt to remove the well-known landmarks of truth. It were unworthy the genius of our history to deviate from her course, in quest of legendary lore,

which, for the most part, must be wholly founded on fiction. We are at liberty to make no excursions, without the proper limits of our humble vocation, into so boundless a field. It is the office of our pages, to record only what we deem authentic, and neither to place our own conjectures and invention in the rank of facts, nor to give currency to the speculations of others, “ *Nequid falsi dicere audeamus.*”

Having premised so far, we beg leave to resume the thread of our narrative, by reminding the courteous reader, that we left the captain of the guard, some pages ago, on his return homeward from the barrier. It was of the last consequence to that individual, that his having held communication without the wall of the city should not transpire. Were it known, that he had received aught from a state messenger, in trust for the queen regent, it was evident, the deposits would be required at his hands.

Now there were dim motives of action floating in the brain of Hubert, with which the reader will presently be made acquainted, which made such an event especially to be deprecated. He would have felt glad, certainly, if there had not been a party to the transaction, but no liberty of choice was left to him ; the vicinage of another was unavoidable, and it only remained to get the affair hushed up, in the readiest mode that offered. The superstition of the soldier of the watch favoured his suit, and Hubert felt satisfied, that, at all events, for the next day or two, the man would not break troth. Beyond this term, Hubert required not his silence.

With these ideas passing in his mind, the captain of the guard retraversed the esplanade; and his meditative steps awakened the still echoes of the ruinous causeway, conducting to his own abode. How much of hazard had he not incurred that night ! with the view, which he hardly acknowledged to himself, of perpetrating a hideous moral baseness, under pretence of abetting the designs of a man, in whose power, prophecy, and circumstances had thrown

him, but whom, from his soul, he abhorred. In the downward path of life, which, for years, this man's passions and his errors had driven him to tread, his course was taken out of his own direction. Every twig, he madly clung to, in hopes of arresting the impulse of his fall, only acted as a rebound, and tended to accelerate his ultimate fate. Like that diver, in the Gulf of Charibdas, spoken of by Brydone,* Hubert had leaped after the glittering bait, sinking, at each venturesome plunge, deeper and more deep, into the abyss, till his earthly fortunes, and his soul's health became alike implicated in the whirlpool.

With gloomy apprehensions for the event, Hubert reached his rudely-thatched habitation, and, lost in thought, paused for a moment beneath a sort of pent-house, which, supported by wooden pillars, projected from the roof, a few feet beyond the wall, in front. After concealing the box and packet, in the folds of his military cloak, he tapped at the low postern, which, at the first summons, was opened, by a lovely young creature, whose dazzling neck and bosom, partially betrayed by the light and insufficient covering, with her minute and "many-twinkling feet" flashing forth unsandalled, from beneath a scanty night-rail, loosely thrown about her, proclaimed, she had hastily arisen from her couch, for the purpose of letting in her father. If time, and a course of vice had left an isle of health and verdure, in the sterile waste of Hubert's heart, that green oasis was the shrine and the temple of this beloved being; if one gleam of feeling lingered in his bosom, over which the rack of misfortune sunk not hopelessly dark, that feeling was exclusively sanctified, by parental care and affectionate solicitude for his sweet girl, the sole offspring of his departed Veronica. Oh, no! it was not for himself he repined: let the tempest lift up and rage! he could stand its assault, even as a fixed rock, which the constant surge chafes at,

* See Tour through Sicily and Malta.

but wears not—let the shafts of fate speed 'gainst his indurated front! as from a steel garment would the brittle instruments recoil—but when his thoughts, for a moment, rested on that beloved one, he felt his spirit languish, with his fortunes. In all else he was armed in mail of proof. His desire of vengeance, he knew, would uphold him in the everlasting conflict with his hard destiny. He was like the hero of antiquity, impassable save at a single indivisible point, but thither were the arrow aimed, he knew, it must penetrate to the quick. If his past sorrows told him not, his past sins might have, and that emphatically, and unanswerably, that the bagnio floor of this bad world was no resting-place for female innocence; its desolate and thorny haunts no pleasant asylum for the probation of loveliness, whose only earthly trust is treachery. Over the future destiny of his Veronica would Hubert often weep bitter scalding tears—for her sake, chiefly, he dragged on the lengthening chain of existence—for her, the sweat of his brow was gathered, and the sin of his soul contracted—for her he girded up his soul in treason, living the confederate of robbers, and the thrall of robbers, and *their betrayer!* And that child, not yet eighteen, with her radiant hair; her clear brow, her eyes “of that same hue in which the heaven delights;”* her enchanting countenance; her low silver-stringed voice, entrancing the listening ear to catch the minutest echo of that minstrelsy which, like the inspiration of some soft reed pipe,† enriched the air when she spoke; her graceful buoyant shape, just beginning to round into the full and swelling contour of womanhood—that child, whose every heart’s throb was but the gushing forth of that filial tenderness, which was “part and parcel” of her existence, and which constituted a worship

* Wilson.

† ἀ σύριγγος ὡς πνοιά
λεπτοῦ ἐνακοῖ.—ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ.

and a religion, that not the most fervent enthusiast ever went beyond, in prophetic cell or depth of solitude;—that child, the strong necessity of whose heart, without reserve or doubt, and undiverted by the influence of any lighter instinct, was love, in its most elevated character, in its loveliest form and aspect—the intense essence of that sympathy, which is among the best and most pious of our human feelings, and which alone (as the oil of aroma will preserve its entirety and sweetness, unpolluted by the mire of the puddle, in which it may have spilt) the corruptions of this world have failed to deteriorate. Such zeal of affection burnt, pure and exclusive, on the secret altar of the heart of that child, who little imagined how early the perpetual course of crime, had hardened and perverted the nature of one, so highly reverenced. Yet, despite his occasional shows of confidence, she apprehended, that her father owned certain *arrière pensées*, which he was unwilling to reveal. Many fortuitous circumstances, that could scarcely escape her penetration, and obscure intimations from day to day, to which it was impossible she could wholly close her eyes, had given her to know, that Hubert's proceedings were not consonant with that strict rule of moral rectitude, which her unsophisticated sense, enlightened and hallowed by the clear sunshine of the Gospel, had chalked out, as the only standard of human conduct; nevertheless, she was far from conjecturing how thoroughly unpurposed were the impulses, on which her parent acted, or to how forlorn and desperate a state his want of principle had reduced him. She might hardly guess, that, like the bankrupt devotee of the blind goddess, he had played on, through very excitation of the game, and that, of late, he had lowered and lowered the amount of his stake, until it reached its minimum.

On the door opening, Hubert entered into a sort of parlour, the walls of which were plastered and whitewashed, and whose large fire-place, with its culinary ap-

plices, betrayed the domestic uses, which the apartment occasionally served. The single lattice of this room was almost on a level with the thatched pentice without, that seemed erected on purpose to eclipse the day-light. Having doffed his iron beaver, Hubert placed the packet and the box beside it, unperceived by Veronica, on the rough table, over which he carelessly threw the military cloak, and then drew a bench, close to the stone hearth, whence the expiring embers of a dull wood-fire, cast a fitful and sullen gleam over the miserable accommodations of the room. On that bench, with his elbow on his knee, his forehead resting on the palm of his right hand, and his eyes fixed gloomily on the ground, Hubert seated himself, and the very intensity of his gaze betrayed its lack of speculation, and showed how lost he was within the sanctuary of his inner spirit. Veronica stood by. She could not but feel hurt at Hubert's prolonged silence, though neither his abstraction, nor its continuance, could be said to surprise her. She guessed, that those taciturn fits, to which he was of late accustomed, did not result from internal repose, and instead of denoting a vacuum in his thoughts, she had reason to apprehend, that they rather betokened the jaded restlessness of a brain, fraught with fearful subjects of contemplation. At length, she took courage, and ventured to speak.

"Father, *edes atyam*,* are you not well?" she inquired, with that thrilling emphasis of the heart, which alone belongs to woman, and which only woman can conceive, and give breath to.

"Well?" repeated Hubert, with an impatient start, but without raising his eyes; — "Yes, yes, my love, surely." — But Veronica apprehended something in his looks and gesture, which contradicted this assurance. His manner was like to that of a man, labouring with some

* Dear father.

dreadful conception. “Is there more *krummolz* at hand?” presently he demanded. Another faggot of knee-wood was brought by Veronica, and thrown on the hearth, and again all was still. The contemplation of Hubert, which seemed to prohibit conversation, lasted some minutes. At length Veronica, having, more than once, suppressed what was rising to her lips, broke through the restraint, by enquiring, in a low and timid accent, into the nature of the alarm, which had drawn her father from his quiet home, at that dead hour of the night. So completely was Hubert pre-occupied, with the thoughts then dominant in his mind, that Veronica had to repeat her question, before he caught its purport; and, when he did so, he briefly, and almost peevishly replied; “Nothing of moment, love,”—and again he fell into deep meditation. Struck by the sullenness, with which Hubert repulsed those attentions, he was wont to delight in, Veronica fell suddenly into silence, when presently, her father himself broke the chilling pause, by abruptly addressing her.

“Prithee, my love,” he said, “fetch me a stoup of our *korösian*.^{*}” The damsel half started; she gazed intently on her sire, by the glimmering and inconstant light. His countenance bore evidence of something wrong within. It looked astonishingly pale; Veronica thought, she had never before remarked it so pale. She felt troubled, and appalled at she knew not what, and, throwing her taper arm round Hubert’s neck, she kissed his forehead, and then, having dashed aside an involuntary tear (whilst her feet glanced along the brick-floor, as lightly and as brightly, as two trembling leaves of poplar, drifting beneath the moon), she glided from the apartment. She was not long gone, ere she returned with the wine.

“Father, are we not to return to bed, to-night?” she enquired, as she entered, with an arch smile, and in a

* *Korösian*, the ordinary wine of Hungary.

tone, that, notwithstanding its simplicity, carried with it a somewhat dolorous impression, but instantly, with more seriousness, she subjoined : “ I am sure now, that you are not in health, by your drinking, at such an hour; that is,” she quickly added, on remarking the increased disquietude of Hubert’s countenance, “ I fear, you must be ill!”

“ I am as well as usual,” coldly answered her father; and he raised the *csutora** to his lips, and drained it at a draught.

“ Ah! I bethink me, now,” continued the maiden, with filial pertinacity, “ that dwarfish envoy, from Wallachia, conferred such a time with you last evening. It must be he, who has so ruffled you. I have often remarked, you appear quite a different being, after these messages reach you, from abroad; how heartily I wish, that all your foreign connexions were abandoned, and that you would learn to anchor your heart at home. It should be my whole study to weave for you the fruitful hours into a happy existence. Oh! believe me! I will scarcely lose a section of a minute, in the livelong day, out of your dear sight; and not a thorn hath untoward fortune planted in your pillow, but I will find a spell to rob it of its sting. Only do hold out some hopes, that, in time, you will seek other counsel, than from designing men, that, like eclipses, darken your path, my father: I hope I err; but do you know, I dream of nights, there are, who will one day or other, peril your life, if not, what you should prize more highly, your character. But what is it ails thee, father?” she asked, interrupting herself, as Hubert muttered some inaudible words, between his teeth, while a strange, and agonized expression went over the paleness of his features, like a cloud. Alas! where were his thoughts? He was, perhaps, reflecting how well founded were the apprehensions, in which the maid indulged, and pondering on the

* Flask.

possibility, in the desperate strait, into which he was driven, of shaking off that baleful connexion, which, in his heart, he deprecated, not less than did his child. Disconcerted and abashed, a cold shudder appeared to be passing over him, when, averting his face, his looks lit, half unconsciously, on the unsandalled feet of Veronica. In a few seconds, the whole of the dress, or rather disarray, in which she was so lightly untrimmed, seemed to fill his eye.

"Why, Veronica! how is this, that thou art so rarely clad?" he demanded, in a tone of reprobation; "Prithee retire, child, and apparel thee more warmly—but I give thee but a minute; for Veronica," he added, with significant impressiveness, "I have something to deliver, which is not suited to the watchful day; and lo! if already the night be not waning in the east, where the pale stars are going out like glow-worms. Hasten back, then, child. *There is a thing to be done*, ere the next new-day's sun is in the heavens: a thing I ——, but wend thee, now, away; no reply."

Veronica, not a little amazed, disappeared. While the fair maiden was engaged in donning her body clothes, Hubert removed the wooden case from the table, and passed through the inner door, bearing with him the deposit under his arm. He was not absent above a minute, ere he returned to the apartment, *empty handed*. Casting an additional log on the hearth, he stirred up into cheering life the crackling fuel, till the broad and ruddy flame danced picturesquely, athwart the plastered wall, and diffused its reddening hues, over the whole chamber. Then, taking up the fatal packet, his hand trembled, even like his heart, as he held it before him, to examine, with greater minuteness, its form and appearance. It was a small flat parcel, and even if he had had nothing more to go upon, Hubert would have judged, from its size and weight, that it contained papers. A triple silken braid was passed round it, attached to three seals

of rosin, severally impressed, with the bearings of Count Ragotzy. In Hungary, at the age of our narrative, to read or to write was held an uncommon accomplishment, being an art almost exclusively monopolised by ecclesiastics, and chiefly confined to the peace and solitude of the cloister. Hubert was consequently unable to decipher the address. He turned the dread deposit repeatedly in his hand, contemplating it on either side, and in every aspect, as if he had hoped, by that mechanical process, to discover some entrance,—some channel of communication, between his own curiosity, and its contents. In vain: it had been most carefully closed up, and was sealed at every opening. He thought deeply, and, as his mind darkened with its own suggestions, every faculty of his soul became absorbed, in the vortex of his desperate design. “Now, an I were wise, I might be quits with fortune,” he murmured to himself: “it is the same, I’ll swear, it is the same, and were the secret of these papers known to be in my possession, I might yet re-establish the golden pre-eminence of my birth, and secure, and perpetuate the magic wand of wealth, in mine and Veronica’s grasp. What a harvest might I not reap, out of the Queen’s terrors! I’d coin her nerves; her heart were a mine exhaustless; or, if I deceive myself, and I may not wish that she, or any one, should know of my discovery, let the worst betide, and I keep my own counsel, who can betray me?” He paused, and then, as conscience checked, added, in a suppressed voice, “Count Ragotzy? But with him I am already implicated:—Veronica? Ah no! not she indeed.”

Silencing, by such fallacious reasoning as this, some involuntary feelings of hesitancy and reluctance, he paused, as, again and again, he inverted the position of the packet, pressing it between his fingers, whilst he inspected every fold. The nervous consciousness of one, who knows himself about to sacrifice his honour, and self-esteem, to the busy fiend in his bosom, was stamped

on every working furrow of his brow, and exhibited in his abrupt and agitated movements. His extreme perturbation, evinced the wrestlings and throes of crime, ere she is well delivered of her faltering purpose. His internal conflict was made more evident every instant. A trepidation shook him ;—he started continually, at the sudden and tremulous gasps of his own breast ; he pressed his hand on his knit and throbbing brow ; his eyes deliberately made the circuit of the apartment, and then again rested on the mysterious packet, in a sort of feverish gaze, as though fixed there, by the power of a charm. “Thou keepest my vision upon the stretch,” he murmured, addressing the object of his apparent curiosity : “would I could penetrate thy hidden principle. To be given to Isabella, if the Cygani do not claim thee of me. Ha ! by heavens ! it must be the same packet I saw once, and but once, in the hands of the dying Alicia, and deeper occurrents lie hidden in its folds, than I have time to dream of. Fixed, voiceless confession,” added he, involuntarily speaking in a louder key, “what are thy intents—thy purposes ? what dost thou prate of ?”

“*Of danger and of death !*” whispered a hollow voice, that hovered at his shoulder.

He cast his looks on each side of him, and behind, but no human form met his baffled gaze. Not a little startled, he cried out “Who speaks ?—was that you, my love ?” but Veronica answered not. After again scrutinising the apartment, he raised himself on the window-seat to a level with the latticed casement, which looked out, beyond the *piatza*, upon the narrow thoroughfare. It was the dead hour of dawn,—the dew had not yet sprung upwards with the lark. All was hushed, in deep and grim repose, and the earliest Aurora still slept, on the irregular, and uncouth mansions, on the portal towers, temples, and battlements of the mute city. Hubert was in no mood to look long abroad, on the beauty of the night. Having descended, he paced the room in in-

ward musing. That a voice had spoken, he felt convinced,—horrible and unearthly as were the tones, still a human voice it was,—and the words “of danger and of death,” whispered almost at his ear, were too distinctly wafted on the uttering air, for it to be possible his senses could have deceived him; and yet how could it be? Whence could the voice proceed?

Hubert crossed himself, as he rapidly turned over in his mind the simple topography of his humble dwelling. Like most of the poorer habitations in Hermanstadt, the only chambers were those on the basement story; the largest of these was connected, by a short passage, with the apartment, in which Hubert was at the time, and constituted a sort of kitchen, where, however, a wild crone of a housekeeper was then reposing. Hence, there was an outlet into a paved yard, once sheltered by a roof, which, amissing the support of its wooden pillars, had long since disappeared; it was now hardly enclosed by a dilapidated brick wall, so low in many places, as almost to invite intruders. Beyond, extended a wild and ruinous space, laid waste, and encumbered with heaps of rubbish, and overgrown with tall rank grasses, intermingled with briars, nettles, &c. This demesne had been partly intersected with the foundations of buildings, newly laid, and was partly covered over, by scarcely habitable tenements, that, breached in several places, were left unrepaired, after having been more than half demolished, from the ravages of a siege, which the fortress had sustained, from the Turks, some years previously. These mouldering precincts terminated in a deep moat, which, nearly on every side, peninsula'd the massive donjon, or keep, attached to the castle, or citadel of Hermanstadt, as the building was indiscriminately called. The remaining apartments in Hubert's house, were his own, and that of his daughter, opening on opposite sides, from the central passage before mentioned.

Hubert having considered these ichnographical points,

thought it possible, that some person might have entered the area alluded to, over the broken wall, and that the voice might have issued, from that quarter. Acting upon this idea, he made directly for the kitchen. A broken partition of the wall admitted a dubious, and melancholy light, by the secondary medium of a little window, over nearly half of this miserable apartment ; the moonbeams played on the few coarse implements for household purposes, which hung from the rafters overhead, or were ranged around the wall. No sound reached the listening ears of Hubert, save the hard and audible breathings of the old housekeeper, who, reposing on her small pallet, spread in one corner, without curtains or hangings, mumbled in her sleep, and dreamed aloud. “Holy Mary!” she muttered, “I murdered her not—I delay no more—I’ll see the Cardinal.” Hubert seemed struck, but presently passed on. There were no fastenings attached to the area wicket, and being only upon the latch, it opened without noise. Hubert stepped out, and looked around. The ruggedness of the surrounding ruins was softened down, as they lay before his eyes, in the profound repose of moonlight ; but on those premises no intruder was visible, all was as hushed, and as deserted, beneath the watching stars, as he had left it in front. Shortly, he re-entered the lonely dwelling, and, unmindful of the low murmurs of the housekeeper, made his way back into the apartment, whence he first issued. It would be hard to depict the man’s amazement, on discovering that the street-door, which he had just that instant left bolted, and closed, stood ajar. For several seconds he stopped short, motionless, as if transfixed to the spot, by the rod of some magician. Then he hastened to the entrance, and issuing forth, thought he perceived a human figure, at a short distance, half hid by the deceptive light. He hurried thither, and pausing, peered in every possible direction, in vain : he discovered nothing, which could point out the way the figure had fled. . There was not a sign of

life around, nor near, nor afar off, amid the still, solitary grandeur of the surrounding scene, which was delineated to the eye, as in a panorama. Domes, steeples, turrets, and the distant peaks of hills, lay blended together in the almost imperceptible haze, which, without obscuring, tempered their rugged forms; yet was their outline sufficiently defined, against the dark purple sky, white and immovable, in the grey twilight. The whole city borrowed, as it were, a spectral appearance, from those lifeless moonbeams, which touched it, with a comfortless and supernatural beauty. Hubert was stationed beneath the superb portico of the royal residence of the Queen Dowager. Within that lofty dome were domiciled Isabella, the haughty descendant of a line of kings, and her fair daughter, the heroine of our history, the young, and lovely Czerina. The fretted towers, and spires of the church of St. Theresa, covering one side of the grand square, were visible, half in moonlight, half in shade, immediately to the right; and at no great distance, on his left hand, the proud keep or citadel of Hermanstadt, in the windows of which a taper or two yet twinkled, stood out to the eye, every rent and chasm of time obliterated, in the hallowing light, as it frowned in Gothic and sombre splendour, upon the overhanging precipice beyond. Behind him, at the end of the square, stretched the ancient town, where habitations of clay and basket-work, whose roofs of various unequal heights were covered with straw, held down by transverse poles, lay crowded irregularly together, like a confused chaos, without order or adequate space. These were so close and inconvenient, as hardly to allow a narrow interval, here and there, which might serve to bear along “the tide of human existence.” The high street, as it was named, that in which Hubert resided, was a ravine of this description. It branched out from the grand square, in a line with the royal palace, and extended, for nearly a mile, to the foot of the ramparts, which closed, with its gloomy barrier, portcullis, and

flankers, the city vista. The new town, which consisted of substantial brick edifices, built on a more commodious plan, for the most part terminating in the grand square, before mentioned, was surrounded by a double wall, and a deep fosse. It lay beyond the noble structure, at whose base Hubert stood. Through it, the river Zibin flowed in murmuring channels, supplying every street with a tributary stream, * here trickling in rills, there gushing in fountains, while frequent tanks or basons of the glassy element intervened, populous with the finny race.

Hubert, from whose immediate business in the grand square we have in some degree digressed, was soon recalled, by the sharp morning air, from the deep, and solemn feeling of the moment, to a sense of his situation, and baffled and dejected, he slowly retraced his steps homewards. He entered. Veronica, who had substituted for her night-rail a dark kirtle of the simplest form, was seated on a tripod stool, and crouched her fair body near the hearth, bending, with much intentness, over a leaf of vellum, which she held in her hand, and which, by the aid of the fire-light, she was perusing, with unequivocal symptoms of horror and amazement. Hubert approached her.

"Whither have you been, father?" she asked, without removing her settled gaze from the object, on which her eyes seemed rooted. The words issued almost still-born from her livid lips, her cheeks were blanched, and her whole frame trembled like an aspen.

"What is it, you grasp so wildly, Veronica?" demanded Hubert. But the maid was mute; she merely upheld the script in her hand, before the eyes of Hubert. It was enough to sear his sight. Fresh characters were inscribed upon a label of vellum; they were yet moist; the crimson syllables still, as it were, *welled*. Those cha-

* Les Ruisseaux, qui passent au travers de la ville, la tiennent d'une tres grande propreté.—Description of Hermanstadt, in Mémoires du Prince Rakoczy.

racters were written in blood ! After awhile Hubert found speech.

"Where, child, did you fall in with that, my eyeballs recoil to look upon ?" he inquired, in an accent, significant of the awe and apprehension of his soul.

"On my return," replied the trembling girl, "as I looked round, in surprize at missing you, my eyes accidentally glanced upon this dreadful scrap of vellum, lying on the settle near the fire-place, and I was about to decipher the inscription, when you entered."

"Read it," said her father.

In compliance with this direction, Veronica, with a low and discomposed voice, delivered these words aloud :
"WOULD YOU DESTROY BODY AND SOUL ? OFFICIOUS FOOL ! OPEN THE DEPOSIT, CONFIDED TO YOU, AT YOUR PERIL."

If Veronica was affrighted at the thick strokes of new spilt blood, traced on the instrument, she held shuddering, between her fingers, Hubert was little less so, at their awful purport. The conditional menace, which seemed to pierce the stillest recesses of his soul, and to apprehend the consequences of those suggestions of his evil nature, which he dared scarcely acknowledge to himself, bewildered, and appalled him. He drew the oaken table in front of the hearth. The fire shot its blue flame upward, and the vivid light discovered the ashy paleness, which apprehension spread over the countenance of Veronica. The mode, and threatening tenor of the communication were alike calculated to inspire her with alarm, more especially, that she could form no imaginable conjecture in what direction she ought to shape her fears. But Hubert was not then "*i the vein*" to notice her state of inquietude. His whole soul was too intent on the fearful act he was about to commit. The packet marshalled him the way he was to go, and, like the forbidden apple, held out, in its fruition, the knowledge of good and evil. The purpose, with which he laboured, appeared almost too mighty for explanation. At least, though his eye might

speak his meaning, his convulsive attempts to voice his wish, died inarticulate on his lips, and it was some minutes, ere he faltered out, with that assumed calmness, which his low, half-whispered tone, embarrassed address, and glancing eye contradicted.

“Explain this superscription to me, *Kintsáso*,* what is the purport of the writing?” And thereupon he resigned the missive of Ragotzy, into the hands of the electrified girl, who, on receiving it, held it before the light, as if to assure herself, it was “no false creation proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain.”

“Thus, then, my God! is the mystery of the blood-red script interpreted,” she said, in a voice below her breath, and then more calmly added aloud, compelling herself to a tone of indifference, though trembling with bodings of she knew not what—“Father, this is addressed to the queen-mother Isabella; would you have me consign it to the chest, for security, till the morning?”

“Veronica, attend to me,” began her father with impressive solemnity, and then he paused to collect himself. “Dost thou remember, love,” he presently continued, “how, when thou wast yet a little child, thou, and thy departed mother, and myself, found ourselves one tempestuous evening, at the close of a hard day’s journey, on the borders of the forest of Belivar;—how, when congregated whirlwinds filled the air, with baleful darkness, and the lightning streamed athwart the intolerable obscurity of the night, like the brand of the destroying angel,—when earth and heaven shook, and the wrathful clouds spoke out—dost thou remember?”

“Oh, yes, I do indeed,” interrupted Veronica. “We looked to the heaven upward, and down to the earth, and lo! nought but darkness, and distress! Even the ground, we trod on, appeared to tremble, and a tongue of fire

* Dearest.

lapped all around like stubble. Think you, I can ever forget the goodness of God, evinced in our preservation?"

"Need I remind thee, then," resumed the father, "how, when every instant, the finger of St. Hubert was made manifest, in the duration of our lives, and each interval of additional being came, even like an immediate reprieve, from the awful audit of eternity, that suddenly, and unawares, as by a miracle, we were redeemed? Need I remind you, how, when *those strong arms* snatched us, as it appeared, from doom, and conveyed us, weary and worn, to where food, fire, and shelter cheered, and solaced us,—that an oracle respecting thee was announced, in that cavern, to which we found ourselves transported, as by enchantment—those savage fantastic forms—those rude men and women, who tended on our wants—those blue meagre Cyganis, scarcely bearing the lineaments, or possessing any of the common attributes of humanity, unto whom, nevertheless, we owed our rescue from an untimely death,—their habitation, their appearance, not all the obliterating circumstances of time's current can have effaced from your remembrance.—'Tis true, my love, you were a mere child; yet incidents, which strike powerfully on our senses, in the primal freshness of perception, will sometimes live in our memory, as long as our pulses continue to beat. Oh! there was *one*, among those dark people of Egypt, whose image must have troubled your subsequent dreams, and which no train of events can have wrought out from your remembrance. She, I mean, the haggard *Boszorkany*,* who, emerging, from the further gloom of the subterranean retreat, whither we had been borne, raised thee, my Veronica, in her withered arms, and, in all the fulness of inspiration, predicted your future destiny. With the far-reaching energy of a heated brain, she darkly hinted at the main incidents, which she

* Sorceress.

foresaw, as in a vision, would chequer, and distinguish the history of your days. Canst thou tell me, Veronica, what was't the charmer presaged should illustrate the chronicles of your eventful life?"

"She said," replied Veronica, "I know not what, in her typical and ardent style, of the 'ravished treasure of my bosom,' and 'the golden glory of my brow'—but trust me, sir, it were to be credulous, beyond the license of superstition, however the dark visions of a disturbed, if not alienated mind, retain hold on our memory, to let such thin, and airy circumstance influence our conduct. Ah, no, father, human destinies are not in our own volition; still less do they hinge on the shadowy inspiration* of our fellow mortals."

"Yet often," rejoined her father," obviously discomposed, "they, who make the occult sciences their study, pierce the darkness of the future, as by a self-impulsion of the soul, and will hit on truths with unerring light, which are denied to the elaborate deductions of reason, and are inaccessible to the highest reach of the understanding; nathless, I say not, that they prescribe, or fashion, at their wished pleasure, the order of those events, which they only shadow out. For instance, Veronica, what were those seeds, the sybil scattered on thy heart, to make it swell, ere this, with thoughts of empire? Thus ran her augury, child—'*Thy fate, maiden,*' she said, at the close of her address, '*will depend, on the unravelling of the intricate ways of the lofty, and the proud. When the confidence of the wicked shall be violated, when his trust shall fail, and he be confounded with shame,—when the prey of the Mighty One shall be retaken, and the spoil, seized by the terrible, shall be rescued,—when the signet be broken, and the truth published, along the cause-ways and streets of Hungary,—in that day, little one,*

* Veronica seems to have had much the same contempt for the *μαρτικη τεχνη*, as Jocasta of old.—See the *Œdipus Tyrannus*.

when the eyes of the haughty shall be rebuked, wilt thou shine, amongst the daughters of men, neither the humblest, nor the most insignificant ; till when, thou wilt have to struggle, with many a hard assay of privation, of sorrow, and of peril.' Veronica," added her father, in a voice rendered desperately calm, by his emotions, "the fulness of time, appointed by the prophetess, draws nigh. That packet contains thy destiny, and, if so, shall my child's fate be locked up in its womb, and I not know it ? I will fulfil the oracle!" and Hubert made a movement, as if to receive back the packet, from the hands of Veronica, but that high-spirited girl held the missive aloof, and, whilst the pure flush of high-wrought feelings mantled her ever-charming countenance, her fervid eye kindled into fire ; an almost magnificent spirit seemed, at once, to animate every nerve of her elastic form ; her lip quivered, and the native energy of her character burst into full play, as she demanded, almost in a tone of indignation, " Father, what is it, you would do ? — this is her highness's property, and, let it contain what it may, it must not be invaded."

"The time does not serve, Veronica," answered her father, in a sullen tone, "to be deterred by idle delicacy, or governed, by girlish scruples ; the very ground, on which I stand, is giving way under me. Your future fortunes, my present interests, are at stake ; nay, more, my spent clew of life is now to be untwisted ; the chances of my breathing upon earth, many days longer, resolve themselves into one single cast — they are narrowed to this solitary issue — whether or no, I make my breast the depositary of a secret, which, though the Carpathians covered it, will one day break out. Veronica, I am the thrall of Fate ! On my forehead, at my birth, was branded her cruel wrath. She cowered, with heavy and depressing wing, over my cradle : she hath still clouded my morning, and noon of life, and now, lowereth over its close."

Veronica clenched her hands, and the big tears rolled over her cheek. "Oh, say not so, father ! you rend my heart — my fortunes, and your life ! — they cannot have any connexion with this enclosure, unless, perfidious as the smooth ocean, you, yourself, entail it by basely betraying trust. Oh, my dearest parent, do not charge yourself with this sin !"

"Veronica," said Hubert, "in respect to what you ignorantly call the sin, I hope my purpose will plead my excuse with my patron saint, who must needs be cognizant of the extent of the wickedness, I am anxious to expose to the world, by sounding the depths of this mysterious packet."

"Was ever such deplorable casuistry ?" exclaimed Veronica ; "think you, that the consummation, however desirable, will justify the adoption of such means? Never, believe me, dear father, in the eyes of heaven — evil is not to be thought of, as a stepping-stone to attain some hypothetical, and contingent benefit."

"Ay, there it is !" replied Hubert; "another leaf out of the new-fangled moralities, that, for the first time since the creation, have been broached and started, in this presumptuous age, to the great scandal, and horror of all good catholics. Unhappily, my love, you were early infected by your lamented mother, whom, therefore, may the mother of God assoil, and, in due process of time, take to her bosom !" And here Hubert devoutly crossed himself. "However, child," he continued, "lest there indeed lurk some portion of human infirmity, in the motives, which instigate me to dive into others' secrets, I will not fail, on the earliest occasion, to make a free shrift to our holy confessor, who, after proper penance, will, doubtless absolve me ; though, in sooth," he added, "the twelve months' indulgence which, last Whitsuntide, I purchased, ought, in equity, to cover any such venial transgression, or, verily, my hongrees were ill-bestowed." The father ended, and Veronica spoke.

"Oh? apply not so assuasive an unction to your soul," she replied, with animation; "your fellow-creature cannot, of himself, absolve you, neither will your Creator, through his agency, if you so palter with his righteous judgments, as, premeditatedly, to compromise your eternal salvation, in the assurance of His forgiveness, and thus convert His long-suffering and tender mercies, into an apology of crime. 'Tis a rash venture, to play at fast-and-loose with the Almighty: and oh! my dear father! the horrible paction, you boast of, is a quieting opiate for the conscience, to lull you to destruction. Were you to trust to it, you would find it delusive, as the veriest iris, that ever floated on the sunbeams. How can a creature of clay, like ourselves, have authority to chaffer, with the dispensations of the Most High?"

"No more, I charge you, on your duty, or you will anger me," interrupted Hubert: "how often have I to repeat to you, that I may not listen to your impious animadversions, upon our revered religion? I take heaven, and the saints to witness, you have cost me more to mother church, than the aggregate of my other offences."

"*I, my father?*" ejaculated Veronica.

"Yes; Veronica! the sin smells rank to heaven, by which I was over-induced, at your erring mother's behest, to have you bred, in her heretic persuasion. But now, other business presses. Child, hand me the packet."

"Dear parent," replied Veronica, in a solemn and animated tone; "if religion deter you not, yet can you,—dare you,"—she paused.

"Well, child, well?" said Hubert, tetchily, but half satisfied with this commencement, "what say you?"

"Will you," resumed Veronica, "inspect the papers, after the awful interdiction of this terrible scroll?" and again she raised the sanguine script, which had lain, during the discussion, unregarded on the table. Whilst Hubert's eyes, involuntarily, settled on the words, "that most miraculous organ," which had made it-

self audible, a short time before, breathed again, along the chamber, iterating, word for word, in a low tone, but with most distinct articulation, the inhibition of the blood-stained scroll,—“*Open the deposit, confide to you, at your peril.*” Both caught the words, each one of them, and all of them together; and their cheeks turned deadly white, as, starting, they instinctively looked around in the expectation of beholding the speaker. But the being, from whom the aerial premonition descended, was not to be seen. Their eyes, with objectless horror, sharpened almost to agony, scanned enquiringly every inch of the visible apartment, and sought, with involuntary eagerness, the unpenetrated places around. Still, though a wider scope was afforded to the imagination, than to the senses, for the feeble glare of the hearth contended, but faintly, with the darkness, in the extremity of the chamber, their search was sent in vain; and if vitality, besides their own, pervaded that chamber, it must have borne such a shape, as mortal vision might not grasp, nor, perhaps, mortal mind conceive. After taking a survey of all, within the scope of sight, the eyes of Veronica, and of her father encountered, each seeking to read, in the troubled expression of the other, as in a page, whose story terror inscribed, the answer to the query, trembling on both their lips, *what can it mean?* A curdling awe tingled, through every pore, like so many needle points of ice. Not half an hour had elapsed, since the father’s senses had been startled, by the same appalling voice, and something whispered coldly within, that the invisible, who had twice premonished him, was the same, who had inscribed the prohibition to unclose the packet, And yet, what were the contents of this deposit, argued Hubert with himself, to a spiritualised being, fresh from the everlasting paradise of souls? “St. Hubert pardon me if I err! but the veins of a phantom are not like to swell, with the crimson tide of life. A hem! ’tis a moot question.” To form any hypothesis, which could explain to

him the mystery, was a vain endeavour; and again Hubert ranged his eye, with a bloodshot, and unquiet glare, in the direction of the inner threshold, where all objects lay in deceptive shadow. But, however an over-wrought imagination might suggest, the baffled vision sought, in vain, for any defined outline, in the far gloom of the passage, though the sense of hearing, now become morbidly acute, was “alarum’d,” every instant, by the rustling breath of the night-air. As for Veronica, she sat for long, wholly inanimate and unconscious, with white face, and both hands clasped on her eyes, and forehead. The admonition, ratified in blood, dropped from her relaxed hold, unconsciously. Then Hubert, deriving, like the ostrich in the fable, a false courage, from wilfully blinding himself to the actual hazard of his position, suffered the short-sighted, though subtle policy of his nature, to thrust itself, before the wisdom, that should have controuled it. He snatched the document, out of his daughter’s yielding hands, and, in the same instant, tore off the twisted silken braid, and burst open the outer covering. So great, indeed, was the degree of nervous violence, with which he unripped the seals, and jerked asunder the envelope, that the enclosures were dispersed on every side.

Then first it was, that Veronica testified some sense of what was going on, and her returning consciousness was evinced, by a cry of terror. She carried her hand to her brow, in bitter anguish; beholding, in dim perspective, the sad train of calamity, consequent upon the false step of the last minute. But the fatal deed was done!—there was no receding. The integrity of the trust, placed in her father’s hands, had been broken. Millions of worlds could not buy back again that violated seal, nor oceans of tears wash away the consequence. What acumen can match that of the human heart, impelled to action, by the apprehensions of attachment? It will concentrate, in one convulsive throb, all the lights of

experience, and all the tact of intuition. "Tis that "true wisdom," which Lord Shaftesbury so beautifully insists upon :—'tis indeed something better, than reason and knowledge, being the principle and origin of it.* Thus, with a single glance of her heart's eye, Veronica comprehended the heinousness of the fault, and the fatal expiation, it involved. Oh ! why, in this evil world, doth the principle of sin extend, beyond the guilty, and defile, in some measure, with its deadly virus, all, within the sphere of its contagion ? Oh ! why is it, there is no escape from its all-pervading fascination ? Why is it, that the innocent have to answer for lapses and offences, not their own, and although guiltless of the wrong, are made partakers of the anguish ? If the penalty of error lit only on the head of the erring ; if the just penance, dodging the heels of crime, only overtook the criminal ; if the atonement of sin were singly offered up, by the sweat of the sinner's brow, or the desolate bitterness of the sinner's heart, the divine economy would better accord, in our short-sighted judgment, with that of an all-righteous Providence. But wherefore expostulate with Omniscience ? Assuredly an hour will arrive, when this, and all other difficulties,† that darken the ways of Him, who inhabiteth infinity, will be illustrated, and the full sunshine of heaven break forth, in all its truth, and all its splendour. But, till His "kingdom come," it is not given to our limited faculties, to attempt, what peradventure the angel nearest his councils might vainly conceit—to gauge the depths of Eternal wisdom :—

“ Purblind man

Sees but a part o'the chain, the nearest link ;
His eyes not carrying to that equal beam,
That poises all above.”‡

* *λογίς αρχή οὐ λογος αλλά τι κρείτον.*—Aristotle.

† See chapter xxxviii of the *Morals of Epictetus* :— where the tendency of mankind to atheism, from like causes, is shown, and commented on.

‡ Dryden.

Let us return, from this digression, to the course of the history ;—

“ Oh my dearest father ! ” exclaimed Veronica, in a voice, half choked by contending emotions, “ in what terms will you reply to her grace, when this packet shall be demanded of you ? ” She would have said more, but here her loud sobs interrupted her intended expostulation.

Hubert strove to hide from his daughter, the impression, which her manifest anguish made on him, by occupying himself, in gathering together the various enclosures from off the floor. Assuming as composed a tone, as his feelings would admit of, he said : “ There is something working here, which tells me, that these writings, (and he placed them on the table), interest you, Veronica, infinitely more, than they concern her, unto whom they are addressed.”

“ This is the very excess of wilful self-deception,” answered Veronica ; “ the merest coinage of the imagination. Speak not of me, my sire. Tell me not, these papers bear any reference to me ; but,” she continued, in a burst of feverish anxiety, and with almost a shriek of sudden terror, “ devise, think, ponder, do, ere it be too late, upon some means to avert the catastrophe, which the infatuation of an instant may have entailed. See, see, already the flickering grey, in yonder skies,” (and she pointed, through the casement, to where the morning star ‘ began to pale her ineffectual fires ’) “ announces the approach of dawn. Oh, be speedy then ! 'tis a matter of life and death, we are upon,—every instant teems with fate. Father, what's to be done ? Let us consult,—consult for both our lives.”

The eyes of Veronica filled with tears, as, painfully affected, by her own earnest words, she sank upon a seat. Her appeal shot into the soul of her sire, who secretly regretted his precipitance, and almost wished the deed undone ; but he had now proceeded too far, to be diverted

from his course of action, by reproaches or arguments. He was irresistibly impressed with the belief, that nothing remained, in this pressing emergence, except to make the most of such materials, as his treachery had provided. He was filled with a wild, but profound conviction, that, by means of the documents in question, he was ordained to achieve an important discovery, which would go far to wipe out the offences of his late life, and which might place him in a position, where, instead of needing an indemnity, he might himself command a recompence,—

A COMPENSATION.

Certain severe afflictions, that had wintered the heart of Hubert, several years antecedent to the present epoch, made the glimpse of sunshine, which he here forecasted, peculiarly gratifying; and, moreover, subsequent to the augury above narrated, a strange mysterious confession, of which he had been made the involuntary auditor, seemed, at once, to hold out a probability of such a consummation, and to indicate, that its advent was not distant. As we shall, hereafter, have occasion to recur to the collateral incidents, we now barely glance at, we would merely observe, in this place, that they possessed, for the breast of Hubert, an anxious interest, from their being connected, with the mystery and importance of the identical packet, he had received from Ragotzy. Only through his daughter's agency, was he likely to arrive at that knowledge, for which his soul panted; but he began to despair of moving a resolution, which he found more deeply rooted, than he could have anticipated.

At length, calming his feelings to meet the occasion, irresolutely, he addressed her, “Veronica, *edes kintsem,*”* he said, with a reluctant, and insinuating voice, “it matters not, whether I take advantage of the inadvertance, you condemn, if, as I trust, my precipitance be considered venial, the consequences will be proportion-

* Dear love.

able; otherwise, I may have to undergo a commensurate punishment: in neither case, however, will any doubt be entertained of my having perused these papers, and it would be to no purpose attesting my innocence. Now that the envelop is torn asunder, any assertion of the sort would seem to carry falsehood on its very face. Away then with your apprehensions of still further committing ourselves—that, I tell you, is impossible; nor can we better evade our doom, than by making the very spoil, in which consists our danger, the vantage-ground of our deliverance.—Veronica,” he added, impressively, “echoes are ringing in my brain, and in my heart, which assure me, that the purport of these writings is linked and entwined, in some extraordinary way, with your destiny. The blaze of fate and prophecy is in these enclosures. Read then, love, with eagle’s eyes, and hasten their lagging justice. Read, and relieve me of that dreadful suspense, which, for so long, hath harrowed up my being, under calamities, that might make Patience herself grow wild, and tilt at her own shadow. I shall have, in no long time, to prepare for the sunrise muster. Dearest! he presently subjoined, whilst a glance of impatience stole from under his lowering brows, for our Lady’s sake, take up the papers, and read.”

“ Oh! how I regret, I may not here oblige you,” answered Veronica, in a low, determined voice: “ I would die! yea, not a vein I wear, but I would lance, to pleasure you; only not this, no, not *this*, father.” She ceased, clasping her hands, and looking upward, but her voice became too choaked to proceed.

“ Because,” answered Hubert, with heat, “ *this* happens to be the particular, I require of you—you’d die forsooth to please me! ay, Veronica, ‘tis an easy thing to say, but I do not ask of you to rip your veins up, I merely entreat of a child to save her parent, and, influenced by the pride of opinion, she refuses.”

“ Oh! put it not thus,” replied Veronica; “ you desire

me to do that, which must be sinful in the eyes of God, and I would not, knowingly, incur his anger."

"Be, what you designate a sin on my head, Veronica; I take it all, freely, and without reserve," said Hubert.

"But you may not thus stand betwixt me, and my maker," interposed Veronica, with the look of an admonitory angel, "since every one will have to suffer, in himself, the measure of his individual transgression.—Oh! my beloved father!" she continued, (whilst her enthusiastic temperament glowed with intense, and high-minded affection,) "permit me to point out to you the strait line of duty:—carry these papers, as soon as you return from the parade, to queen Isabella. Inform her, how they came into your possession; admit that, under some infatuation, you ventured to break the seal, but that, afterwards, on repenting of your error, you resolved to convey the documents to her royal hands, with their contents inviolate."

"Do this, father: cast yourself boldly upon Isabella's goodness, and leave the result to Providence."

At this reply, so unreservedly pronounced, Hubert lost all patience. "Jesu Maria!" he exclaimed, in a raised voice, "was ever such infatuation!—proceed to the palace!—you counsel like a child, in ignorance of the ways of this wrong world. Were I to square my policy by your abstract notions of right, I should march to inevitable destruction. Oh! if you love me, forego the scruples of a too sensitive conscience, which, let me tell you, child, in one so young, as thou art, must be a very unstable guide, and monitor, and ought to be subjected to the more competent direction of some holy minister. Veronica, have I not ever been indulgent to you?"

"Indeed, indeed," she replied, in a weeping accent; "from my earliest memory unto the present hour, you have ever shewn yourself the kindest father and the tenderest friend, in the strictest sense of those endearing titles."

"Then do you bless, and requite me for all," responded

Hubert : "it is your peculiar province ; here, *kintsaso*,^{*} receive the papers."

"Oh, no more ! by these tears, no more ! I beg," mournfully replied the maiden, pressing her father's hand to her lips ; but, though she still declined, the quivering of her voice seemed to evince a greater struggle within, than she wished should be apparent.

Hubert could withhold his wrath no longer. "You will not retract your cruel resolution," he exclaimed ; "hear it, Holy Mary ! Behold it, sainted Hubert ! A daughter declines to stretch out a finger, to save her father's life ! I tell you, unnatural girl," he went on, in increased anger, "in the teeth of your heretic persuasion, that it is not agreeable to the great Sire of all, to see a child dispute his injunctions, by whom she hath breath and life. Oh ! there is nothing, I trow, more surely tasks the vengeance of the saints, than filial ingratitude."

Veronica would not trust her voice with any reply, but throwing herself on her knees, at the feet of Hubert, as he delivered the last stern sentence, vented her feeling, in the anguish of bitter tears.

But another auditor was nigh ; one, who, invisible and unknown, had drank in every syllable, that had fallen from the lips of Veronica, and who had been a rapt listener of the discussion, between her and Hubert. He did full justice to the inflexible texture of her nature, and appreciated the accuracy and purity of her judgment ; whilst, in her intrepid avowal of her sentiments, he recognised elements of mind, congenial to the magnanimity of his own bosom. He overheard all ; and afterwards, there were moments, when, in the gorgeous residence of kings, and in the sacred receptacles of piety, the remembrance would almost unman him, when, amidst all the delicious strife of empire, and the pride of fame, and the consolations of religion, he would recal to his mind, the steadfast

* Darling.

disobedience of this right-thinking maiden, whom neither threats nor entreaties could prevail upon, to act in opposition to the dictates of her conscience.

Veronica was still kneeling at the feet of Hubert, and bitterly lamenting, as if her heart would burst, when, suddenly, a faint distant noise without, challenged attention, and awakened the moonlit silence of the night. Hubert listened, and changed colour--the deep hum gathered, as it came on, and became gradually more thick, and louder, sounding like the monotonous tramp, and clash of armed soldiers.

"Listen!" exclaimed Hubert, starting up, in a voice which bespoke his inward anxiety.

The sound continued to roll nearer and nearer. At length, the military reached the house, where they made a sudden halt. Veronica sprung upon her feet, and the unusual occurrence effectually startled her out of her tears. Breathless with alarm, they both stood, mute and still, looking at one another, in the attitude of listening. The silence, however, was but momentary: soon violent knocks resounded against the door, and a voice was heard, demanding admittance, in a tone of authority. The moment was full of fate. To huddle together the several papers, from off the table, into their original envelope--to elevate the near window-seat, and inchest the packet, in company with the mysterious scroll, within its cavity, was, with Hubert, the affair of a moment: the hollow within served the purpose of a trunk, and was the safer place of concealment, inasmuch as its lid formed a wooden seat, projecting from beneath the casement. At the same instant that he shut down the covering, he cast a significant look, at his pale daughter, and then went, and undid the clumsy fastening of the street-door. Immediately on its being thrown open, a file of soldiers crowded into the humble chamber, which soon became fully occupied. The commander of the detachment stepped forward, and, bending stiffly, addressed himself to

Hubert : " You are the captain of the night-guard, I presume ? "

" Even so ; and you the Graf Bathori, if I mistake not ? " answered the other.

" Then, sir, I attach you, on account of certain crimes and misdemeanours, touching the state. Do you," continued the speaker, turning to a soldier, " examine the habit of this man, whether there be any thing treasonable upon him—some of you search the house, and whomsoever you find, conduct hither."

In obedience to this order, two of the men quitted the room ; another approached Hubert, who, stepping back, motioned him off, with a determined gesture, while he turned to Bathori, and, with a more collected mien, and in a firmer voice, than could have been expected, considering his critical situation, requested to be informed, by whose authority he acted.

" You cannot suppose," he said, " that I shall submit to this arbitrary caption, at your mandate, unless you can produce legal, and sufficient grounds for the procedure."

" There is my warrant ; satisfy yourself :" and thus speaking, the baron presented him, with the lettre de cachet, for his arrest. " You perceive," he added, as Hubert looked it over, " it has affixed to it the lord regent's sign manual."

" Martinuzzi ! hem ! so, so !" muttered Hubert indistinctly to himself, whilst an inexplicable expression stole over his sallow features. " Comes the arrow out of that quiver ? " He paused, as if lost in thought. Quickly recovering himself, he gave back the warrant, with a slight obeisance, to the officer, saying, " I acknowledge the formula, and am ready to follow you."

The soldier then proceeded to search him, but nothing of any consequence was found upon his person. Meanwhile Veronica had drawn herself, with an involuntary sort of motion, close by the side of her father, and, twining his arm into hers, stood, with a countenance, as pale,

as if she had just risen from the grave. She did not weep—she could not; she held her hand to her bosom, which heaved, in rapid rise and fall, against her bodice, but her thoughts “lay too deep for tears.” She perhaps reflected, that they had “fallen on evil times,” when treason and tyranny, reciprocally, begot each other, and when there was but one step, from the dungeon to the scaffold. That fatal grade, it was commonly reported, followed closely on imprisonment, and an internal spasm agonized her young heart, like the earnest of anticipated orphanage. One of the men returned, and communicated, in a low voice, with his commander. The latter said something that was inaudible, adding aloud, “Molest him not.” The man bowed, and immediately again left the apartment.

The heart of Veronica beat thickly. “Father,” she warbled, in a thrilling and silvery whisper, that vibrated to all the deep feelings of that father’s heart, “where thou sojournest, there will I abide; they shall not part us.”

Hubert took her bloodless hand in his, and pressed it to his lips. By and bye, a commotion, indicating some new cause of alarm, became audible, and a most peculiar voice broke out into objurgations and complaint. A struggle within the narrow passage followed. Veronica was not slow in recognizing the harsh intonation of the ancient housekeeper. Her outcries resounded through the house; but, malgre every saint in the calendar, and, what was more, despite of tooth and nail, her captors succeeded in hauling their prize, into the room; and surely (to use the eloquent apostrophe of Burke) “never before lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more resplendent vision.” In truth, the old domestic was a very giant of a woman, and could only be borne in the arms of the two soldiers, by dint of main force; the handkerchief, which had bound her head, in lieu of a night-cap, had fallen off in the scuffle, and hung suspended from her neck; her long, lanky, grey hairs stream-

ed, like those of a sybil, in every direction; and she exerted her bare arms and legs, with an energy of good will, not at all common. And now outspake the officer : “ Let the *Kurvanya** loose,” he vociferated, in a key, an octave higher, than the shrill clamour of the housekeeper. The men, immediately, set the robust virago on her feet, who, darting forward, with a strange straddling sort of locomotion, to where her master and Veronica were stationed, and, having likewise recovered her enjoyment of speech, seemed disposed to make liberal use of her privilege.

“ Well-a-day!” she began, in a harsh and grating voice; but Baron Bathori cut her oration short, *in limine*, by commanding silence. Then addressing himself to Hubert, he said, “ You must accompany me to the castle forthwith. Soldiers, secure the prisoner.” At the word, two of the company grounded their muskets, at Hubert’s side. Then it was, that Veronica prostrated herself, before the officer, and, raising her voice, exclaimed, in an accent of the most touching pathos, “ Permit me, sir, to accompany my dear father whithersoever he goeth ; it is the especial privilege of a child to tend her parent, and therefore you will accede to my prayer.”

“ Willingly,” answered the officer, making a motion to raise her from his feet, which she firmly resisted—“ were the option mine ; but my orders extend only to the person of your father, and I cannot, on any account, depart from their letter.”

For a bitter moment, the shock of this repulse seemed to overwhelm the beautiful suppliant, and she suffered her head to droop, in disappointment. “ Good God !” she ejaculated, “ do not say that ; you cannot have the heart to mean it. It is impossible ! Oh ! yet,” she proceeded again, elevating her rich countenance, “ vouchsafe me this single indulgence, and Heaven bless you, sir.”

She ceased. The agonized tone, with which these words

* Kurvanya may be grossly rendered, Mother of harlots.

were uttered, produced a sensation of secret sympathy, in all, who heard them. Her glittering tresses had burst their braided trammels, and fell, in glossy mazes, from her upraised head, adown her round, long, full, regal throat, and fairest bosom, looking, like the foliage of the cypress, floating over purest statuary-marble ; her small clinched hands were outstretched, her upcast burning eyes contradicted the death-like paleness of her countenance, and her exuberant, and dimpled lips, pale with their proper odours, were partly open, whence her breath, suspended with her fate, hardly gave signs of life ; but her little heart knocked perceptibly, at her bosom, like an unfledged bird, against its bars. Hushed to silence was every other sound—the agonizing pulsations of that heart were alone audible. As she thus knelt, with her upward countenance, her hands clasped in each other, and the exquisite symmetry of her flexible form, set off, by her drooping dress, which, from her having slipped it on in haste, was left a good deal disordered. Veronica presented a study, such as Chantrey himself might not have disdained to make immortal, in the modelling of a Naiad. There was in that startling moment the silence of deep feeling, which the young Bathori might hardly abide ; but he remembered, that he had a paramount duty to perform, and strung himself for the task accordingly. Again, he would have raised the pallid girl from her incumbent posture, but she defeated his object, exclaiming, in an impassioned voice—“ Let my knees grow to the earth, till thou yieldest to my agony ; say only one word, yes—say yes—I conjure thee, sir, in the tenderest name of filial piety, to have mercy on us both. Oh ! bethink you, what it is, to be thrown into captivity, to drag, day after day, a galling chain—I mean, not that on the body, but on the free mind—to be borne down, without having a friend to relieve the ceaseless pressure, on the overwrought spirit. Oh ! give me leave to attend my father—our lives are twisted on one thread, and cannot be spent asunder.”

Thus saying, she uplifted her imploring eyes, to the face of the official, anxiously abiding his next word.

Bathori remained unmoved, though his voice was tremulous, as he replied, “It may not be;” and he turned aside, to conceal, and get rid of an emotion, that did him honour.

“It may not be: march!”—“No—halt! every one,” cried the half-distracted maiden, with a scream, that thrilled through the very bones of her listeners; then, with the grace of a fawn, she bounded on her feet, and flinging herself upon Hubert’s bosom, wreathed her lily arms around his neck. Presently, fixing her large and glorious eyes, on the officer, as if she would dart into his very soul, she said, “Let me rest here—it is my father’s breast, on which I lay my head. If you tear the sapling from its stem, will it not perish? Sir, overpass your warrant, at your peril; think not, that I will be murdered tamely. If you rend the ivy from the trunk which nourished it, will it not droop and die? At your peril, I say; I stand upon my rights. Read—read, sir, the warrant, that is in your hand, or that behind, that blacker instrument, which commands my father’s execution. I know your tricks of state, but neither in one, nor in the other, do you find *my* death compassed. I stand upon my rights. If you tear my father, from the cordage of these arms, I die, broken-hearted—broken-hearted! I will not be murdered—see to it—it is not in the writ.”

So rapidly was this passionate appeal poured forth, with the overpowering intonation of despair, that Bathori, who alone possessed the authority, felt too much overawed himself, for some time, to interfere.

“I will thank you, sir,” at length he said, again addressing himself to Hubert; “to prevail upon your daughter, to submit, patiently, to what my duty obliges me. I really trusted, ere now, to have lodged you in the castle.”

Hubert turned to his daughter, and, with a gesture, that

intimated the uselessness of further opposition, signed to her to obey. But the enthusiastic girl, clinging closer to his neck, exclaimed:—"They will have hard work, who tear thee from me, father. To the castle, with all my heart,—let us be taken thither."

"Ay! but *together*."

"Yes," she added, and the piercing tones of her voice sunk, in her father's ear, to a whisper, which seemed to express the very soul of filial affection,—"it shall be *together*."

Then Bathori, in a subdued, but settled voice, said to those next him,—"Secure the prisoner, and detain the maiden." The command was barely issued, when it was obeyed; and Veronica was hardly made aware of their purpose, before she found it executed. The new moon was colouring the horizon, and all was chill, and comfortless, as the hour, as Bathori turned abruptly from the house. A few men-at-arms defiled after him.

The adjutant motioned to the unhappy father, who, with impassive eye and lips, lingered, for a minute, contemplating the well-nigh lifeless form of his adored child, painted, in the tender rays of that matin hour. Oh! what a long history may sometimes be melted down, into a minute's pang! What a world of retrospection; what thoughts, and feelings, tumultuous, and intense, may be epitomized into the interval, even of a minute! "While the body lives half a pulse's stroke,"—ay, even in so brief a section on the dial-plate of human life—

"The phantoms of a thousand hours,
Each from his voiceless grave,"*

thronged, with dreadful concentration, on Hubert's mind; and, as some obliterated scroll, instantly, yields back its latent inscription, at the spell of science; so the past events of Hubert's life, touched by the fierce chemistry

* Shelley.

of remorse, were, on a sudden, brought up into view, in tints, as fresh and as vivid, as when they livingly greeted, and soothed his feelings, in the dawn, and meridian of his existence. Lo! in the shape of the being before him, he beheld her mother, as when first, in the bloom of youth, and rank, and opulence, she linked her destiny, with his. But one offspring blessed their union; and, heavens! how the hearts of the fond parents came to repose, on the little Veronica. Surely, never was a babe more lovely! And the infant grew, and waxed in years, and beauty; and the dear prattler is their joy; yea, in all the bitterness of their lot, under the pressure of calamity, stricken by the anathema of Heaven, they would kiss their child, and be grateful. Her happiness was their day-star, from on high, glittering, in the horizon of a brilliant to-morrow, and shedding the prospective light of hope, and consolation. The cherub lost her mother; and Hubert, holding the innocent child in his arms, breathed the incense of a vow, over the manes of his Veronica, and resolved, for that child's interests to live—for her sake, to strain every exertion, that he might one day reinstate her, in her proper sphere, apart from the ordinary dwelling-place of mortals, the vapours, and the storms, which deform, and disturb the moral hemisphere; enshrining her—

“ In regions mild, of calm and serene air,
Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot,
Which men call earth.”

But more especially, he vowed to train her, in the paths of purity, and peace; to save her, by his parental providence—by his unsleeping care, from the assaults, and machinations of an unfeeling generation. Great God of the quick and dead! How had he redeemed his oath? Driven from error to crime, yielding to temptation after temptation, sacrificing all he held dear, either to some sordid calculation, or new object of selfishness, his deeds had gradually sunk their condition in life, to one of compara-

tive destitution ; had blasted the prospects of his throne—destined treasure—of the being, on whom he had only to think, to become—

“ Patient as the female dove,
When that her golden couplets are disclosed.”

Well, that may be a rankling reflection, but it hath its consolation--she is left him, for a stay, amidst all his calamities ; his potent arm might yet protect her ; his presence, evermore, watch over her, guard her, from every sin, and shield her, from the sharp visitation of this wrong world!—“ How so ? ” and tumultuous memory recurred to the travail of the fearful present. Hubert looked about him bewildered. Full streamed the cold grey light of dawn, through the open portal, shedding a lurid, and terrible, distinctness on the melancholy scene. “ How so ? ” half shrieked aloud again, the wretched man, in the access of his agony—“ Where then is my Veronica ? Deserted ! pennyless ! insensible, in the arms of strangers ! How ? can her father, who is so pledged, and who loves her, with the intense love of that close connexion, violate his oath ? He abandons his child because of his crimes. He goes,—ha ! to what bourne am I bound ? —perhaps the scaffold ! ”

The colour, which had been varying, on the cheek of Veronica, at this instant, wholly fled. One languid look she cast, towards her distracted parent, and then sunk motionless, into the arms of the old housekeeper, as, under the escort of the guard, Hubert rushed, from the apartment.

MANUSCRIPT IV.

“ For love-lorn swain, in lady’s bower,
 Ne’er panted for the appointed hour,
 As I, until before me stand,
 This rebel chieftain and his band.
 Have then thy wish.”

The Lady of the Lake.

IT was noon,—

“ The noon of autumn’s glow,
 When a soft and purple mist,
 Like a vap’rous amethyst,
 Fills the overflowing sky;” *

the sun rolled afar, through the cloudless expanse above, in all the beneficent majesty of light ; the gentlest breezes swept along the surface of God’s earth, blessed, by his minute providence, with one of those sharp sparkling days, when the vigorous freshness of the autumnal air proves so stirring to the spirit, and so bracing to the frame of man. “ The round world jocund laughed.” The levee of the lord regent of Hungary was attended by ambassadors from many courts, by ecclesiastics, and by military adventurers. They comprised the learned, the pious, and the enterprising—men, who were the master-spirits of that adventurous period, but who, nevertheless, shone, like lesser lights, within the orbit of Martinuzzi.

The castle of Hermanstadt was of remote antiquity, having been built by Herman of Nuremberg, who followed Gisele, the consort of St. Stephen, into Hungary. The

* Shelley.

antient seal of the city attests this. It bore the impression of a tower, circumscribed, with the following words, in the Roman character “ SIGILLUM CIVIUM DE VILLA HERMANNI.”* The site, on which the citadel was built, had been perforated, with subterranean passages, leading to various parts of the city, and without the ramparts. A long, narrow, and embattled gallery of the castle, laterally overlooked an inner court-yard, athwart which was drawn up, at the time we speak of, in military order, a troop of Martinuzzi’s mercenaries. In this gallery, apart from the courtly assemblage, stood Count Ragotzy, unnoticed, as he believed, by any one, gazing abroad, with vacant eye, and evidently sunk deep, in reverie, or rumination. This gallery, which formed a heavy, and artificial recess in the building, was flanked by a stone balustrade, or parapet of unusual height. It was accessible, by means of massive, and folding doors, at present unclosed, which opened, from a sort of semicircular vestibule, within the castle. Here and there, this battlemented bartizan commanded a striking prospect; it looked out upon the capital, whose “ dull palaces, and dirty hovels,” as we before stated, were proudly throned, over the shelving site of two detached, but trifling eminences, which were united, by a massy gate-way, at the base, or interjacent hollow.

The city of Hermanstadt, or Czeben, as it is called, by the Hungarians, dominated in the midst of an extensive plain. On one side, it was protected by its powerful citadel, and by the rocky precipice, we before mentioned; elsewhere it was defended, by massive walls, studded with immense towers, and the fortifications were surrounded by a fossé; “ fort large, et rempli de l'eau de deux ruisseaux qui viennent des montagnes voisines.”†

The eye of Count Ragotzy glanced rapidly over these defences, beyond which, the rays of the sun lighted up

* Thúróczius. Chronici, P. 11. cap. 18.

† Memoires du Prince Rakoczy.

certain white pavilions, which the infidel banners, floating against the sky, proclaimed for an Ottoman encampment. From where the Count was stationed, he might pursue a considerable part of the course of the river Olt, as it winded, among a slight ridge of hills, which melt irregularly down, into the plains, that abruptly terminate, at the famous gorge of the Rothenturn, or Red Tower. To the north, the more level country stretched its huge, and black forests, in graceful outline, till they became lost, in the semicircular chain of the Carpathians. These rugged mountains, that, like an azure girdle, bound the horizon, in the clear distance, seemed to supersede any necessity, for the warrior towers, and bulwarks, which were locked up, in their embraces.

Such a combination of nature and art, might have well won the chieftain's eye, to dwell delightedly on its beauties; but had the panorama even exceeded in loveliness, what we have attempted to describe, which might hardly be to a soldier's thinking,* it would have brought no relief, at that moment, to the stern, and iron colouring of Count Ragotzy's meditations. He leaned, indeed, over the parapet, and to a casual observer, would have seemed to be entranced, with the landscape, which lay, silent, and steeped, in the plenitude of light, and sunshine, beneath his feet; but his glances all turned, in reality, to what was imaged, within his own bosom—his mind was its own mirror. He looked on the lineaments of nature, with indifference, or unconsciousness. He contemplated the deep blue expanse of heaven above him, and beheld the day-god, in his meridian hour, shed virgin light over half the world, with an unheeding eye, and neither did the

* Le peu que j'ai dit de ces plateaux à cotes roides et couvertes de brousailles de fonds d'étangs des vallons et de rivière serpentants, enfin de haute montagnes que contiennent dans leurs détours des bastions impénétrables environnées de rochers en forme de caves, suffit à démontrer les avantages pour la guerre.—Description of Transylvania, in Mem. du Prince Rakoczy.

warmth cheer, and fill the soul with serenity, nor the golden shadowless radiance touch, and lay its turbulent passions at rest. Alas ! there is no surer obstacle to such complacency, and pure satisfaction, than the habit of mind, induced by selfishness, and sin ; and it would seem to be the intention of Providence, that the laudable sensibility to the excellencies of nature (which certainly offer the most unalloyed of sublunary enjoyments,) should be possessed only, by the single-minded, and the “ unspotted before the world”—“ *Sunt, qui formidine nulla imbuti spectent.*”

Within the vestibule, or porch to the temple before-mentioned, some of the usual hangers-on, and retainers of a court were assembled, either from duty, or waiting till his eminence should go forth. There, in their official accoutrements, were stationed the familiar servitors of the regent. Pages, and knights, passed and repassed, with business, and anxiety, in their faces. Many, of more, or less note, loitered about, in expectation of an audience ; or, having been just dismissed, lingered, ere they left the castle, and, grouped in separate knots, were lounging, and gossiping together. Among others, two cavaliers were observed conversing, on an easy, and familiar footing, as they leisurely crossed the vestibule. One of these appeared a middle-aged, military-looking sort of personage, of a grave, and noble aspect. If his physiognomy was not indicative of brilliant talents, or much mental decision, it was, at least, characteristic, of a mild accommodating nature, nor was incompatible, with the possession of a considerable portion of judgment. His forehead was capacious, and the general cast of his features sedate, and prepossessing. This was Valentinian, Count Turascus, general-in-chief of the Hungarian forces. His companion was younger in years, and displayed a greater degree of spirit, in the lines of his countenance ; but, on recollection, we need not describe him, he being the same young nobleman, who conducted the arrest of Hubert.

" Why, i'faith," observed Turascus, in reply to an inquiry of the baron, " this is an unaccountable whim of the sultan's herald extraordinary,—for that's the phrase,—since transmitting an ambassador to any power, under the cope of the universe, would imply a certain equality, too glaringly derogatory to the supreme dignity of the magnificent Soliman."

" How long, think you, will the emir persist in remaining without the walls?" asked Bathori.

" Probably, during his tarriance amongst us," said Turascus, " which, however, is of uncertain continuance. You see," he continued, pointing to a magnificent encampment, established on the banks of the Olt, " where, beneath yon rich pavilion, flaming with silk and gold, Abu Obeida, (that's the infidel's name), at present abideth. A difficulty hath arisen, it seems; for, however spacious the canvass tenements, he has had pitched for him, they will not contain a moiety of his peacock-train, which is, alike, vast, and gaudy.

" How has his excellency acted, under such a dilemma?" inquired Bathori.

" Why, though, for some strange cause, Abu Obeida himself, is unwilling to repose his turbaned head, beneath a Christian's roof," replied Turascus, " he does not entertain any repugnance to his attendants taking up their quarters, within our city; therefore, the regent has given directions, for the waste and ruinous precincts, extending from the back of the High-street, to these castle walls, to be shortly cleared, and covered over with temporary erections, for the accommodation of the greater part of his excellency's retinue." *

" This very dawn," said Bathori, " my duty called me,

* Une espece de plaine, ou l'envoy de Soliman II. avoit placé son camp le long d'une rivière qui porte le nom d'Alt. Mais il n'y a pas assez de terrain au dehors, pour y loger une foule de Turcs, aussi commodément que dans la ville, ou bientot s'étoit campé la suite de Basha. Ep. Rer. Hung.

to within a stone's throw of these demesnes ; I had the melancholy task of apprehending the captain of the night-watch."

"Good God ! and is he a traitor ?" said Turascus. "I passed that man, (Hubert he is called, is he not ?) for the first time, the other morning, and I know not what, but something there was about him, which made a deep impression on my mind ; the thought of other days came over me ; I could have sworn, only that the thing was impossible, that sweet, and bitter memories were common to us both, from having been acquainted in happier years, when Hungary, Transylvania, and Bohemia, were under one rule, ere ill-fated Lewis,—but 'tis no use lamenting the past," and Turascus turned away his head, and hastily brushed off, from his eyelid, a big drop, which seemed to belie his manhood.

"General," observed Bathori, after a pause, "I own my surprise at your having only, for the first time, so lately encountered the captain of the night-watch, in Hermanstadt."

"Why, it has so happened," returned Turascus, "that the routine of his duty has not, till within the last few months, called him to serve with his corps, in this city ; and, you know, I only returned hither last week, after a prolonged absence."

Bathori was silent.

"And that man, then, is a treasonable character !" resumed Turascus, in a musing, melancholy voice : "alas ! we live in strange times,—God uphold the right !"

"Ay, pray heaven," said Bathori, "our noble regent sit firm !"

"I thought not of him," said Turascus, coldly.

"Prithee, general, of whom else?" inquired Bathori.

"The Lady Czerina," answered Turascus, with a deep sigh, "and bondaged Erdély. It irks me, they should wear shackles, and I stand by to look on't." With these words, Turascus, taking the arm of his more juvenile

companion, the two magnates melted from the irregular assemblage, and passed, through the folding doors, into the presence of Martinuzzi.

Meantime, the busy hum of voices, high in argument, or whispering, in eager consultation, ceased not for an instant. The chief topics of discussion turned, as usual in such cases, on the tidings of the day :—on the rapid progress the reformed faith was making, throughout Hungary, and Transylvania — the insidious tendency of the present warlike movements of the court of Vienna — the probable conduct of the Sublime Porte thereupon. Then was canvassed the late miraculous evanishment of Count Oldimar, one of the governors of the fortified city of Coloswar, who was reported to have been visited, in bodily presence, by some evil spirit, and borne away, at midnight, in his clutches.

Another topic of interest was contained in the strange, and weighty intelligence, which had reached Hermanstadt, that morning, of the death of the ferocious freebooter, and renegade, the Waivode, Peter of Moldavia, who, after having, for years, braved the justice of eastern Europe,* was done to death, it was said, by Iwan, one of the Wallachian richters. This Iwan, surnamed *Vilez*,† although, according to all accounts, a mere youth, had contrived to occupy a considerable space, in the world's eye. His very name was a war-cry among his followers ; and the feats of incredible strength, and bravery, which were currently reported of him, induced an extravagant opinion

* “ Dans ces temps déplorable où la cruauté habituelle de Turcs, les rigueures refléchies des généraux de l'empire, le fanatisme de la liberté le fanatisme, plus cruel encore, de la religion, sembloient s'être réunis pour accumuler sur la Hongrie toutes les calamités qui font souhaiter à l'homme sensible qu'on n'eut point écrit l'histoire de ses semblables, *Pierre* surpassa en cruauté les plus impitoyable partisans.—On disait de lui, cet homme ne trouvera jamais un Paradis, mais il mene six enfers avec lui.”—*Histoire des Affaires des Moldaves*.

† *Vilez*, Hero.

of his prowess. In truth, his beauty, courage, and wonderful endowments were the theme of every tongue. No one knew what was his lineage, or what land gave him birth. He burst on the world with the dignity of a hero, and started, at once, perfect, and in arms, like Sin, from the head of Satan. Unlike to other marauding Wallachian chiefs, the aged, the helpless and the innocent, were sacred from his attack. No poor man's cottage was ever burnt to the ground, by Vilez Iwan. No worthy Hungarian's mansion was liable to Vilez Iwan's night assault—no beautiful maidens, or gallant youths were carried off, to be sold to slavery, by Vilez Iwan. Nor did the Richter exact any contributions, from the wretched natives, for sparing their possessions, and respecting their liberties. The ruthless leader of the Cyganis, and the “Bloody Peter of Moldavia,” found, in the redoubtable Richter, their most uncompromising opponent. The whole country hailed him, as another Alcides, born to cleanse the land, in those bad, and broken times. Such were the occurrences, newly indexed, by the hand of Time, or whose causes, and consummation still lay wrapt, in his dusky folds, and they were discussed, with considerable warmth, and acrimony. But there existed other subjects, which, although, perhaps, “more germane” to the matter, if they happened to be touched upon, it was in a voice, scarcely drawn above the breath; whilst the obscurest hints, and inuendos were dropped, and passed, from one to the other, respecting the critical situation of Hungary—the rivalship of the regents—of the hostility, in which they held each other—of the resolved, and haughty inflexibility of the queen-mother. And then, as the accents of the speaker died away, in a most oracular whisper, the discourse turned on the melancholy prospects of the youthful Czerina, and sad deductions were drawn, from that lady's hereditary claims, joined with her present position, and the aspiring character of her guardian. The notorious ambition of that personage, unrestrained by fear, or, perhaps, by prin-

ciple, gave too much reason to suspect him of the worst. It was, indeed, manifest that a kingdom was within his grasp, if the scruples of conscience, or visitings of nature, withheld him not, from stretching forth his hand, to clutch it. That the event was yet delayed,—that the trembling balance of the house of Zapola yet hung suspended, by the master-hand of destiny, was ascribed, by many, to the most guarded circumspection, on the part of Martinuzzi, though, perhaps, from a very few, his abstinence, and moderation might not escape the reproach of vacillation, and infirmity of purpose; but all agreed, that the inclining scale would shortly be decided, by the conjuncture of affairs, in favour of his open assumption of the regal title, and that the grand sequel of the lord regent's policy would, at length, be made clear, as noon-day, by his taking that decisive spring, which must secure him the supreme authority, for life. But this object could hardly be attained without the ruin of the royal house, and many an unfledged sword was half bared, at the apprehension. The youthful soldier, and the native and fiery nobility, attached to the blood of John of Zapola, and devoted, by loyalty or partizanship, to the service of the Queen-Regent, Isabella, whom their intrigues, or the intrigues of their fathers, had first transplanted from a foreign soil. These, the members of an armed, and lawless aristocracy, it was supposed, were touched, with commiseration, and felt eager to vindicate the rights of loyalty, by inscribing the name, and the injuries of their sovereign, on the banners of rebellion. Still, even the chance of their interference being of service, was a frail one; and if, as was apprehended, the ambition of Martinuzzi aspired, beyond the condition of a subject, the days of Czerina were probably numbered. Thus it was agreed, that all was feeble and hollow, in the internal state of Transylvania, whilst every view, from without, bore the most threatening aspect.

Such were the materials of thought, and action, which rumour, in the full play of her thousand tongues, bruited

throughout Hermanstadt, and such were the “*ambiguae voces*,” which she scattered abroad, in the shape of an hypothesis, or couched, in the rounding off of some quaint apothegm, no less dark, and enigmatical. But Count Ragotzy noted little of all, that was spoken ; he found too much matter, within the repository of his own bosom, to suffer him to incline a willing ear to inexplicable rumours, and idle speculations ; he remained, where, as he believed, an intervening angle of the parapet, against which his back rested, intercepted him from the view. The longer he revolved his injuries, in the gloomy recesses of his mind, the more his mental irritation wrought on him, till, at length, his voice blasphemed on the air. The smothered exclamations, and broken soliloquy, which follow, were interspersed with expletives, which our pen refuses to transcribe.—“ Ha ! Peter of Moldavia murdered !—Martinuzzi, after all, refuse to admit me to his presence !—The mine undermined !—from the pride of all my hopes to be plunged into the abyss of utter desperation !—Cool, cold, dissembling, damned priest !—thou knewst of Peter’s death all the while !—nay, most likely, his assassin was thy agent ! Now, by the dames of hell that wait upon him ! I have a mind to mate that man, in his hour of pride. He is a legion of devils to me—shall I hie me to him at once ?—and,—I could do that—I could ; I have that blazing here, which — no ; being alone, defenceless, and a Cygani, ’twere sheer madness. He, doubtless, thinks me in his toiles, and his means are such—and such his stretch of authority, that I must not resort to so desperate a measure, while one other expedient be left me. At the first word, I spoke, he would order me to be gagged, or himself pierce me on the spot, though that spot were God’s altar, he would not hesitate. Oh ! his threats, and actions go together—I know that man well, and what he has at stake ; so I’ll take a safer step, and surer—no, I’ll wait—I’ll not confess, save only at the last extremity. I’ll speak to Hubert first, ’tis not too late ;

come what will — come the worst that may betide ; the possession of these papers, and the contents of that case, are for a rock of dependence, against the tempest. Ha ! after all, the lion, turned to bay, may prove no contemptible opponent ! — Let the dog spring at his peril ! — Look to it, subtle inquisitor — I'll not be hunted down ! — and now for Hubert."

Count Ragotzy, having thus arrayed his bad passions in their darkest garb, shifted his ground. In doing so, his eye caught a glimpse of the figure of a man, at some little distance, whom, he had been too much under the dominion of an uncontrollable fury, previously to observe. The form, besides, had been partly shrouded from observation, until that moment, by a projection of the building, beyond which the Cygani chief was posted. He, we speak of, was wrapped in the *szüröd territs'd*, or peasant's cloak, and stood, or rather reclined his back, against the wall, while eying the soliloquist, with no little earnestness. That person naturally started at the thought, that he might have been overheard, and, laying his hand upon his dagger, vainly endeavoured to recal to mind the precise words of his monologue, so as to determine, whether he had not betrayed himself. On this head, he remained at a loss, but the self-possession and intrepidity, annexed to his character, did not desert him. In any point of view, he thought his most advisable course would be to pass the stranger, without taking any notice of him. He, therefore, walked forward ; but, ere he reached the folding-portal, the other was at his elbow. In a deep, abrupt, but silver-toned voice, the stranger spoke : " My Lord !" The count stopped short, as the man, with still more emphatic intonation, reiterated, " Lord Ragotzy." The Cygani suddenly fronted the man, and endeavoured to read his purpose, in his countenance. His sallow complexion, the uneasy working of his nether lip, and the inconstant, yet, at times, piercing expression of the eye, formed a portent, by no means

prepossessing, and, combined, with his other characteristics, to warn the count to put himself upon his guard. He appeared to be of middle age, and was slenderly made; but, however diminutive in stature, his limbs were symmetrically moulded.

The brigand would again have pursued his way. These startling words arrested his step—"Is Lord Ragotzy bereaved of his senses, that, at noon-day, he utters aloud his malisons, in the strong hold of him, he deems, and proclaims his enemy?"

"What say you, sir?" returned the count, in surprise at the tone, and tenor of the other's address.

"Methinks my words need no translation," said the man, in a low mysterious tone. "Other palace walls, than those of Dionysius, have been reputed to have hearing, and *these* walls! which, on all sides, describe the iron circle of despotism — why, Lord Ragotzy, there's not a coigne of vantage but hath its tell-tale funnel; there's not a buttress, behind which lurks not an eaves-dropper, and every parapet owns many a spiracle, by which the voice of disaffection finds its way, to the ears of tyranny. What think you, Count Ragotzy, when I, who am planted on this spot, with orders to watch, and report your movements,—I tell you, to your face, you are in danger." This was delivered, in a voice, which it was impossible could escape notice.

The count was staggered—"In danger!" he repeated, "from whom?—of what?"

The stranger raised his arm, and pointed significantly, towards the door of the ante-room.

"What is it, sir, that you would have me understand from this — I comprehend you not — speak out, or let me proceed — you are silent — stand by." With these words, as if suddenly resolved not to be trifled with any longer, he moved forward.

The unknown retired, slowly, in his front. "Beware of those men, who await your coming, at the doors, lead-

ing to the hall of state," he said, in a sort of cautionary whisper.

"Await my coming!" echoed the count, again pausing—"explain yourself."

"My lord," answered the other, with an astute smile, but still in the same low key, "I have said enough, if you please to understand me—if not, perchance too much."

The brow of Count Ragotzy darkened: again he fixed his eye keenly on the *fronti nulla fides* of the speaker, where a self-asserting reserve of irony seemed to indicate a character, obscure, and problematical, at the best, and which, the more the bandit studied, the more he felt at a loss to decipher. A new suspicion, all at once, darted within him. "Ha! I see," cried he, while his face gloomed, on the stranger, like a thunder-cloud—"thou dost this only, to play upon my fears; whether prompted, by avidity of gain, or governed, by a sportful wanton humour, matters not,—I warn you, however, once more, not to push my patience too far—I am not the sort of man, I suspect you deem me, nor in a frame of mind, to brook your practices; so make way!" The stranger offered no reply, but seemed still disposed, by planting himself full in the count's path, to oppose his further progress. Ragotzy, whose irritability of temperament was at no time very amenable to control, felt nettled, at the fellow's pertinacity, and, after vainly again attempting to rid himself of his attendance, turned upon him, with a flushed brow, and an eye of fire. "Villain! stand on one side," he exclaimed.

The other, nevertheless, persisted in his endeavours, to impede his steps, saying, at the same time, with that provoking nonchalance, which predominated, in his whole demeanour, "Would you speak with that man, you call Hubert, methinks, you go the right way about it."

These few words effectually attained their purpose. Count Ragotzy turned abruptly round, and, fronting his

officious interlocutor, said, whilst he searched, with steady, and piercing glance, the uncertain map of his countenance, “ So, it seems, there is more in this, than mere impertinence ; come, I *will* sift this matter. Rascal, you’ve crossed a man, who, tottering on the verge of the black desert, that lies beyond the grave, recks nought—nought, human, or divine—so mark me, sirrah. this cold iron, which I now lay bare, shall be presently crimsoned with thy heart’s blood, unless you declare, why you beset my path.”

The man shrunk back, for a moment, and then, in the most imperturbable manner, shrugged his shoulders, as, with an apparently assured voice, he replied, “ I am here to do you service ; but I shall make known just so much of my purpose, as seems to me meet, and not a syllable beyond, only ;” he added, drawing nearer, and lowering his voice, almost to a whisper, “ prithee put up your dagger, lest it attract the eyes of yon idlers. If you will, let us confer apart — this way, Lord Ragotzy.”

The speaker forthwith directed his footsteps to the further end of the gallery, where he halted. His effrontery failed not to produce its effect upon Ragotzy, who, after musing for an instant, returned his weapon to its sheath, and then stalked after his strange admonisher. Having come within a few paces of where the man stood, the count, at once, renewed the conversation. “ Whoever thou art,” he said, “ and by whatever motives actuated, thou canst, it is clear, discover, what it behoves me to hear ; so first tell me concerning Hubert ?”

“ One answer will suffice,” replied the man ; then, suddenly deepening his tone, and coming closer to the bandit — “ Lord Ragotzy,” he subjoined, “ you are watched by men, armed, and appointed for the purpose, who have directions to detain you by force, if you advance a step, beyond those inner doors, towards the regent’s presence-chamber. In that case, you will pro-

bably be plunged, into one of those pleasant domiciles, where, even now, your confederate lies imprisoned."

" My confederate!" echoed the count, in alarm ; — " How ! Hubert ? it must be — it is Hubert ! Speak out ! whom mean you ?" And then, with an impulse of the breath, which he could hardly be said to vocalize, his articulation, if such indeed it were, more resembling the gasp of the screech-owl, than any known sound of human utterance, he repeated, " whom ?"

His looks, as he paused for a reply, grew black and portentous, as a thunder-cloud. The other recoiled a pace, before his flushed countenance, and swelling figure ; and it was only, after a minute's space, that he made answer, in a low voice, " Him, you named — Hubert."

Count Ragotzy uttered a single groan, that scared forth the nestled raven from her " procreant cradle," who, mistaking the sound, that thrilled through the air, for the signal of her mate, croaked back her hoarse response ; then, flapping her enormous plumes against the wind, the bird drooped from her sphere, traced a wild, and magic circle, right over their heads, and again darted upwards, into the heavens. Some minutes elapsed, ere another word was spoken, either by the count or his companion. The former, at length, stamping upon the ground with vehemence, as the foam flew from his lips, exclaimed, " Oh, that this priest, and I were now, on a rough sea, with but a plank of a split ship betwixt us, and perdition ! — may these two arms shrivel up, if they did not plunge him down to the world of waters ! Isten !" * he proceeded, whilst, with outstretched hands, he grasped at the impassive air, on which his straining eyes were bent, as if the element were something palpable — " Isten ! or rather let me invoke — if such immortal natures be—Mano ! † only grant, I may, one day, clutch this

* Isten, i. e. God.

† Mano — Devil.

subtle-winged serpent by the throat, and strangle him by inches, till he chokes his last!"

The fury of Ragotzy was terrible; yet the other looked on, with a hard, and scoffing smile. "Excuse me, my lord," he observed, in a somewhat expostulatory tone; "but this is idle, — wouldest thou have atonement?"

"To be sure I would, and will," replied Ragotzy, with the accent, and attitude of an exterminating spirit— "Yet no," he presently added, "not atonement, but more, sir, I'll have vengeance! — Ay, though that packet, and my golden prize be lost to me, — which I do not believe, — for ever, I'll find modes of vengeance!"

"Why so you may be avenged, in fitting time," replied the other; "but now, you stand at disadvantage; — spies are about, and you speak loud in wrath."

"Spies! — though the air were bribed to serve the tyrant, I'd speak the thoughts that bustle for a vent; ay, if I burst, out they should go."

"Beshrew thy intemperance, my lord — list to a tale: After you and Father Dominick, as the style goeth, parted company last night, each imagined that the other had retired to rest; yet both went about their proper business. The monk, as ever, succeeded, in what he undertook, but thou wert foiled, Lord Ragotzy, as thou deservedst."

The Cygani would have gazed at the speaker, but, in his turn, met a look, whose unwinking fascination, like a spell, seemed to penetrate his very soul. Wincing under that fixed, and caustic survey, he lowered his eyes.

"Father Dominick's object," continued the stranger, "was, as you guess, the causing Hubert to be apprehended. And your's,—"

"Hold there!" interrupted the count, in a subdued voice; "wert thou cognizant of what thy speech inferreth, thou art not mortal. But one, who breathes the vital air, might guess at it; nor he, only that, years ago, I ——" he ceased abruptly.

" You would have enacted a similar tragedy, my lord," broke in the other, in the same bold, and superior tone, he had adopted from the first; " you meant, last night, to do a deed, whose very imagination is chronicled in hell, branding your soul with such ransomless perfidy, as not all the fires of purgatory, through countless ages, might regenerate. A deed, Lord Ragotzy, and that, in the holy and amazed light of dawn, which midnight hath no pall, so heavy as to hide,—it is so wicked. Think you, the after-baptism, of burning lava, that priests prate of, was ordained for such motiveless malevolence as yours? Trust me, otherwise, my lord : trust me, otherwise!"

It would be hard to say, whether surprise, or resentment, held most sway, in the bosom of Ragotzy, at that moment. He felt the hot blood start rapidly through his veins. Thrice, he involuntarily laid his hand, on the hilt of his sword, and as often left the weapon in the scabbard, undrawn. In the end, however, his amazement, mixed, possibly, with some undefined, and unwonted emotions of shame, mastered his rising anger; and, curbing his natural temper, as well as he could, he addressed the other, though, evidently, in a constrained tone.

" Well, then, you are acquainted with circumstances," he said, " which, I had supposed, only hell and myself were cognizant of. How you came by your knowledge, you best can tell. I look at you with all the powers of vision I possess. You appear to be mortal man. It is inexplicable to me, yet so it is; but tell me—do you,—" he ceased abruptly, as if gasping for breath, and looked at the other, with wistful earnestness, for above a minute, without again opening his mouth. His tones, and gesture implied the most mysterious, and awful apprehension of the sense of what, he was about to ask, whilst, speaking articulately between his teeth, and under his breath, yet with solemn energy, he demanded, "*Do you know more?*"

" That question I must be excused answering," replied

the stranger, with a glance, into which was thrown no small portion of sarcastic expression:—"Thus much, however," and the lips of the man curled, with a bitter smile, "I would whisper to thy conscience. Thou hast served thy apprenticeship to the Cygani, Unna, and art thyself, I wis, the leader of her *Pharaoh nepec*,* and their trade is blood." Ragotzy shrunk back, in excess of amazement. "But," presently resumed the other, "let us consult for your present safety. Say, you see Hubert, and arm him with fortitude, to endure the evils of the time."

Ragotzy pondered for a moment, ere he replied;—"Who thou art, I know not; what interest thou canst have in my affairs, I cannot tell; nor by what sorcery, thou hast gathered thy intelligence, have I a conception: but this I know, out of thine own mouth thou betrayest thyself. How should I speak with Hubert, when, as you said but now, he is in durance?"

"It might not be impossible, I ween," returned the other, "to bid the bolts of his dungeon shoot back. And though but one man in Hermanstadt, save him you wot of, could bring an interview to bear, I can name that man."

"By'r, lady!" exclaimed the count, "is it credible, that corruption can unbar the gates of the state-prison of Hermanstadt? who is he of whom you speak?"

"Viscount Rodna, the lunatic," replied the stranger, coolly; "the ward of Martinuzzi."

Ragotzy was mute with astonishment, for a moment; when, fastening his dark eyes upon the imperturbable face of the speaker, he began to fancy, the features were not wholly strange to him. "And, in the Mano's name! who art thou?" he breathlessly demanded.

"I, my lord!" drily answered the man, with a smile, that resembled a sneer; "I am Luke Swartz, Count

* Pharaoh's people, the Hungarian appellation of gipsies.

Rodna's keeper, at your service." The sudden rush of thought, attendant on his instant recognition of the individual before him, palsied the beatings of Count Ragotzy's heart. He felt angry at his previous dulness. The manner of Swartz, from the very first, had haunted him with vague reminiscences, for which, since the motives, which governed the fellow, were as impenetrable, as those of some visor'd mute, he could not assign any precise cause; but now, the impression was accounted for, by the peculiar associations, connected with this person. The keeper seemed to apprehend the conflicting thoughts he had, in a manner, raised in the head of Ragotzy, and his lip slightly curled, with the *anguis in herba* of his characteristic sneer.

" Well," said the satirist,* if we may be allowed so to accommodate his phrase, " 'Tis hard not to indulge in quizzing." If Count Ragotzy caught the momentary expression, which pursed up his companion's countenance, he did not deign to notice it. He traversed the gallery, with hasty and irregular steps, backwards and forwards; then turning shortly round, he demanded where he was likely to meet with the young count?

" Your movements are beset," began the keeper, after a pause.

" Laissez faire à Don Antoine," interrupted Ragotzy, touching with his finger the hilt of his sword. " This passport, sir, hath borne me through worse dangers than now environ me. I knew this citadel, when but an urchin, and all its windings and turnings are as familiar to my recollection, as is the tortuous policy of its lord."

" Where doth Count Rodna lodge?"

" Of what passes, between you and that youth, I will be the medium," replied Swartz gravely.

Deeply annoyed was Ragotzy, at finding himself so absolutely dependent upon the good offices of one, whom

* Juvenal.

he considered so much his inferior, and in whose regard, he began to entertain a sentiment of aversion, whilst there involuntarily mingled with his antipathy, something, that resembled anxiety ; it was impossible, it could be fear ; but there was no help for it ; so, endeavouring to hide his vexation, he said, in an indifferent tone, “ I cannot conjecture, what purpose thou hast to serve, that thou forcest thyself, on the dangerous councils of a man, like me.”

Swartz, fixing an eye of earnest regard upon the chieftain, replied, “ I should suppose as much.—Well, please to hear my explanation, my lord”—he stopped, and after a minute’s inward cogitation, thus, with solemn countenance, and deep, impressive voice, resumed—“ A valued friend of mine—that is, I would say,” he added, quickly correcting himself, “ his near relation—I speak of time past —was cruelly and scandalously wronged by that individual, upon whose head, I overheard you imprecate revenge. The king dying—I mean, my lord, the friend I mentioned, hath measured, in his secret soul, the provocation and the penalty. He, and I,—yes, I,—oh, how I loved once ! and with no adulterate fondness ; but my broken sighs were spent on air, and that man eclipsed me in the affections of the lady of my homage.” The keeper turned his head on one side, as if to hide his countenance.

“ Thou love !” muttered Ragotzy ; “ one would imagine thy heart to have been all brains.”

“ Is’t not enough ?” continued the speaker, with startling emphasis ; “ then, hear further—The child of a noble, though decayed family—a fair and blue-eyed girl, born a Hungarian, was my sister. One only, very fair, as I said, and young, and warm, and oh ! her hair was like the sunbeams, and her voice, voluptuous, was so *very* sweet, ’twas painful. She came to know *him*, and, ’twas rumoured, he was too familiar.”—Here, for an instant, the sallow face of the speaker assumed a lustre, as if

the blood, that flowed in his veins had been fire, and had rushed, from his whole body, to illuminate his features. Count Ragotzy gazed astonished.

"I cannot talk of this," he went on; "the rumour was a lie. Within her patient heart she locked his image, and the restless guest wore out its tenement—that's all! He, my lord, allured her into the darksome void of the tomb, and smiled the while.—Enough; she died of love—of the blight of singleness. She died of love, unrequited, unsatisfied, and, as yet, unavenged. But now, he's rank i' the wind, my lord—that priest; and vengeance—sure, as the slow hound of fate, or the famed Spartan dog, of scent sagacious,* shall dodge the traitor to his doom, let him double and turn, however he will." There was a minute's pause.

"And you hope to find an active coadjutor in me, hey, sir?" observed the Cygani, with a tone of scorn.

"Truly, my lord," replied Swartz, "we are glad to press into our service any collateral aid, that presents itself, and your courses, and ours seem to hold together,—at least for awhile. One partizan we have, by the way—a Wallachian—now in this city—ay, living within a stone's throw of these ramparts, whose resurrection, after having long been supposed dead, would startle and make pale, I ween, the good citizens of Hermanstadt. But yourself, my lord, are meant to do most active, and important service. It was with the view of turning your animosity to our purposes,—of enlisting it, in revenge of my friend's and my own injuries, that I broke upon you, with that admonitory address, which preluded our present conference. Be sure, lord Ragotzy, had you proceeded into the hall of audience, as you were about to do, when I interfered, your arrest would have been inevitable, and now-a-days, the prisons of Hermanstadt, I need not tell you, are much the same, as her charnel houses." There

* Κυνὸς Λακαινῆς ὡς τις εὑρισκός βάσις,—Sophocles, Ajax.

was silence for several minutes. The countenances of both, from different causes, darkened. Count Ragotzy naturally felt a degree of pleasure, at finding, he had so able an auxiliary at hand, at a time, too, when he so greatly stood in need of his agency. In yielding, however, to his first impulse of satisfaction, he deemed it unwise, entirely to surrender himself to it. At all events, he resolved, ere he embarked in dangerous, and concealed intrigues, to proceed with circumspection, and look well, lest that mysterious tale of enmity, he hardly understood, should prove a mere fiction, to answer some sinister purpose of the relator.

With this end in view, in rejoinder to the other's narration, the count, after awhile, observed, "That, which you have told me, may be veritable, but you cannot expect me to credit so strange a coincidence of policy, as would seem to exist between us, upon your unsupported testimony. Who, and what is this friend, whose cause you seem so warmly to have espoused?"

"On that head, I am pledged to secrecy," answered the man; "but I fable not; and, as security for the truth of my averment, without which, our compact were bound by a cable of sand, I am authorized to offer you such hostage, as will be irresistible."

"What hostage speak you of?" said the count, into whose features every additional syllable, spoken by the keeper, seemed to conjure new wonder.

"Even the person of my wretched charge," answered Swartz. "I will deposit him in your hands: you can immure him—(the man hesitated for a few seconds, and then continued carelessly)—where you will, so that he be kept out of the way. Sigismund is held by Martinuzzi in no ordinary regard; he takes a deeper interest in the fate of his poor protégé, than is supposed; and it would be as much, as my life is worth, were I to be met in the streets of Hermanstadt, after the intelligence shall reach the cardinal, of the unhappy creature's disappearance.

Fancy not, I would so commit myself, unless, with all my nerves, I were prepared to further your purposes, till time waken truth."

"It may be so," said Ragotzy; "but I do not understand, where is the mighty gain of keeping custody over a madman."

"If you do not, Count Ragotzy, ask your mother," replied Swartz, with a mysterious air. "Bid HER rate the value of my pledge, and act accordingly."

After a minute's deep rumination, the count said, but as if speaking to himself, rather than addressing his companion, "I must, at all events, have free discourse of Hubert, and hear his report of where he has hidden those treasures. In every way, I am unfortunate, and this untimely murder of the waivode has disconcerted my best-devised projects."

"Ha! that last was an ugly accident for the politics of the House of Polgar," interposed Swartz, fixing one of his peculiar, and sinister smiles, on the features of Ragotzy.

The count's eye caught that most fiend-like scrutiny, and, if he shrank at the allusion to his family name, from a perfect stranger, he was even still more revolted, by the man's accompanying smile. He kept, however, a dignified silence, and Swartz resumed.

"The bloody Peter little apprehended what arm he had to encounter, when he dared cross the mighty Iwan."

"That name," cried Ragotzy, "runs through me like a fever: but, sir, what mean you? The public rumour goes, he, Iwan, murdered Peter."

"Ay, in single combat," returned Swartz.

"Have you heard how the encounter came about?" inquired Ragotzy, somewhat nettled; "since, methinks, thou art privy to the whole world's doings."

"Why, I know a thing or two, I believe," answered Swartz; "and, only, that I think you would not care to have me describe the particulars, I could inform you, how the Moldavian came by his death."

"You mistake; I would willingly learn," said Ragotzy.

"As you will, count," responded Swartz; and his keen eye seemed to reach the seat of those thoughts, which the other would gladly have hidden.

"You may remember," he presently began, "you left your trusty, and most meet ally, with his ancient Romans, encamped on the plain of Thomash. There they were directed to wait your orders, and hold themselves in readiness to march, at an hour's notice."

"And so they were," exclaimed Ragotzy, involuntarily.

"Ha! you see all vaticination is not monopolized, as you Egyptians pretend, by your precious race," cried Swartz, in a sneering tone. "Well," he continued, in a quiet, regulated voice, "on the uprising of the day after your departure from the camp, tidings were brought, that the Richter Iwan had taken up his position, on a neighbouring height. Peter, at first, arose in a fury, and went without his tent, to view the forces of the audacious intruder. He saw, he outnumbered the Richter, ten to one. So Peter forthwith waxed valiant, and sent a herald to demand, what the Richter meant, by encamping in his neighbourhood. Iwan returned some scornful, and evasive answer or other, whereupon Peter grew even more enraged, and directed the lines of the Richter to be assaulted, with all the strength, he could muster. Thrice that day did he expose himself to imminent peril, in personal conflicts, with the gallant band of Iwan, leading to the attack the choicest followers of his standard, each time to be repulsed, with considerable loss. You may have heard of the beautiful gipsy, who had lately become the property of this dreadful man?"

"I have seen the *Kurva*," said Ragotzy, in a low, dry tone, and turning away his head.

"On the following day," proceeded the keeper, "Peter escorted her, for greater security, to the town of Kilien-

fala, which, as you are aware, is situate, some league and a half, north of the Waivode's station. During Peter's absence, the opportunity was laid hold of to introduce spies, and emissaries into his camp, and before the Waivode's return, more than a fourth of his followers had gone over to the Wallachian Richter. You may imagine the transports of rage, into which this intelligence threw the Waivode. To guard against further defection, he denounced death, by the extremest torture, to any of his men, who should be caught exchanging a word, with the adverse outposts. Despite, however, of all Peter could do to prevent it, day after day, successive numbers contrived to desert to the opposite ranks, till those of the Waivode were thinned to nearly half their original complement. Things were in this state, when, early one morning, Peter happened to be journeying, on horseback, over the wild tract of wood, that stretches beyond Kilienfala, where, according to custom, he had been keeping vigils, with his fair companion. He was unattended, and had, already, measured the greater extent of the forest, when his ears caught the sound of hurrying horses' feet, in the direction he had just traversed. Misdoubtful, whether the approaching tramp might betoken the pursuit of friends, or foes, he spurred on, at full speed, when, in the act of turning an angle of the beaten chaussée, he was set upon, by a party of horsemen, who, starting from an adjoining coppice, had evidently been lying in wait, against his arrival. You know the daring courage, and intrepidity of the man, and his first intention seems to have been, to cut his way through the opposing force, and trust, for the rest, to the fleetness of his horse. He failed, however, owing, probably, to the animal's being somewhat spent with travel, in executing his purpose; and so, drawing in rein, he put himself on his defence.

“ ‘ Yield thee, bloody traitor, in the regent's name ! ’ cried the foremost of the company.

" 'Thou must away with us, to Hermanstadt, to answer, at length, for thy reaching crimes, thou ruthless renegade !' exclaimed another.

" 'Ha ! Jean Balassi, Thomas Nadastis, what mean ye by this outrage ?' returned Peter, in a conciliatory tone.

" 'If you know us, how dare you open your mouth, unheard of monster !' rejoined Nadastis, passionately : ' did you not conspire, with the governor of Nicopolis, the infidel Achametes, treacherously, and inhumanly to betray my brother,* the patriot Maylat, into the power of Solyman,—what time he, and this noble gentleman, his friend, with their unconquerable band of brothers, retired to the neighbouring city of Fagaras, from without whose impregnable walls, not your 30,000 horsemen, nor the whole force of Achametes, could have dislodged him ? Did you not, infernal villain ! invite my unfortunate brother, to a solemn banquet, and then, inhospitably, and impiously, goad him by taunts, which, you knew, his choleric spirit would never brook, to rashly lay his hand upon his sword, and so, furnish a plea for your detention of your guest ? Does he not linger, in consequence, at this moment, in hopeless exile, near the Euxine ? When Maylat was made captive, Freedom herself might have despaired ; and, for that piece of treachery, and the blood of young babes, and the sacking of cities, and thy long course of tyrannous rebellion, thou shalt shortly answer, by the blessing of God, before the tribunal of Martinuzzi.'

" ' Maylat only suffered retribution, due for his execution of Aloysius Grittus,' replied Peter, ' and thou, Balassi, after our terms of friendship, for thee to—'

" ' No more,' interrupted Balassi, ' deliver up thy sword,—if he does not surrender, instantly, seize, and cut the monster down.'

* Nadastis married the sister of Stephen Maylat.

" 'Yield thee, in the name of the regent!' shouted the whole company, as they closed upon Peter.

" The Moldavian waivode backed his war-horse, and, at that instant, the equestrians, the sound of whose horses' hoofs, he had before heard, in the distance, came up at a gallop. They were two, simply clad, in that sort of half-military garb, which the disturbed state of the district warranted. The younger, loosing the bridle of his steed, dashed the rowels into his sides, and drew up, on the spot, where, flushed and panting, Peter stood at bay; and, while the horseman's bright eye flashed, in emulation of his streaming sword, he shouted, in a voice, that rang through the air, like a trumpet, 'The regent's name! In the sacred names of country, and of freedom, defiance to your regent! His outstretched, tyrant arm, is far too short to reach us here; nor shall he make this gentleman another of the victims of his insatiate ambition.'

" The astonished assailants were staggered, for an instant, by the suddenness of the onset; but quickly, and sternly recovering, they rushed forward, at the command of Balassi, to slay, or make captive, all three traitors. The inequality of numbers would seem to have augured only one issue, and that a speedy one. But the party of Balassi closed on no ordinary adversaries; and it was soon seen, what the terrible energy of brave men could effect, against fearful odds.

" You are acquainted with the prodigious strength of the gigantic Peter, and can bear witness to his warlike prowess; but, to conceive the velocity of his young assistant's movements, and the nice, and desperate rapidity of his strokes, you must have been present."

" Without interrupting you," said Ragotzy, who seemed very attentive, " I would inquire, whether you yourself were in the fray, that you describe so well?"

" I was so," quietly replied Swartz; " but you shall

hear. Nothing, I assure you," he proceeded, " could withstand, for an instant, that astonishing scymetar. Two of his opponents were dashed from their seats to the earth. The rest soon gave ground, and, ultimately, took to flight. In vain Nadastis exhorted; in vain Balassi, by voice and gesture, would have rallied them, to resume the contest. The panic was fairly sped; the fugitives gave their steeds the rein, leaving two of their party dead, on the field of battle.

"Gallant sir," cried Peter, when he had recovered breath, "to whose resistless arm am I indebted, for so great a service?"

"When I can say, I am worthy of the name, I may some time have to uphold, and am certified what that name demands of me, I will acknowledge myself; till when, excuse me, gracious sir," replied the young deliverer: "but may I inquire," he presently subjoined, "to whom I have the honour of addressing myself?"

"I am the Waivode of Moldavia, and a prince of Wallachia," replied Peter, in so arrogant a tone, as if he would have struck his hearers into the earth, by the announcement of his formidable titles.

"Thou the waivode!" cried the other, with undissembled consternation.

"I am that prince," was the rejoinder. .

"Gracious heavens!" exclaimed the intrepid youth—"and do I at last behold, with my own eyes, Peter the Bloody?—Peter the murderer?—Peter the abhorred of all Hungary? Art thou that creature, and yet no leprosy upon thee?"

"What audacious boy is this?" cried the waivode—"devil's luck! art foregone in mind? Now, bloody as I'm given out, I were loath to raise my arm against my preserver, those words were, else, thy last. Thou art one of the lacqueys of the Richter, I reckon, hey, lad? and art taught to expect preferment, by abusing thy lord's betters? Come, wear my colours, and quit that milk-

livered chieftain. Thou hast given me good reason to know, thou art well worth thy appointment, and I happen to have a service to put thee on, will need mettle such as thine.'

" 'The Richter Iwan acknowledges no lord living for his betters,' said the companion of the youth, who had not before spoken.

" 'Then ye are his soldiers — I guessed as much ; I owe your lord a long score, and for nothing more certainly, than his present daily attempts to corrupt my warriors. Vengeance is sometimes tardy, but I wait my time. It is my boast, sir, that no man ever yet injured me, who was long lived.'

" 'If you consider the Richter in that predicament,' observed the same speaker, 'your boast, in his regard, may turn out but a braggart's trust.'

" 'Does he wear charms ?' said Peter, scornfully ; — 'you may tell your lord to have a care, I shall find him when he least counts on it — if on the battle-field, well ; but if not, he may drop some hour to sleep on his pillow, and wake I have myself witnessed more than one such surprising decease.'

" 'And been a main instrument of that effect, or thou art universally belied,' observed his rescuer.

" 'Young sir,' returned Peter, 'what I do, I dare vindicate — I never deny my deeds ; but here our paths separate — my videttes are within hail. Bear arms with me, and let us on together, or for your own sakes, part company.' There was a pause, but the two seemed unwilling to depart.

" 'Prince,' said the younger, at length, 'you were right in supposing us to be Iwan's men, but it does not follow, we may not tire of his command, as, it is reported, your troops do of yours. Say, we take service with you, will you furnish us with a speedy occasion, to requite the Richter for certain slights, he has lately cast on both of us ?'

“ ‘ Beyond my hopes ! ’ exclaimed Peter — ‘ as ye will, gallant gentlemen, but I may not have my purpose forestalled ; — the Richter Iwan shall fall, by this arm alone. Bring us where our swords may arbitrate our quarrel ; only accomplish that, and you may redeem the obligation, at the price of a moiety of my revenues. I swear to ye — I, who have seen more than fifty blossoming summers — that my soul ne’er panted for any joy, and any advantage of conquest or renown, with half the eagerness, it yearns to set eyes on that insulting springald, Richter Iwan. Though he were encompassed with all the circumstance of war, and nought but this right arm, and the strength of my deeply sworn hatred to spirit me ; alone I’d dash aside his guards and officers, and, with one blow, cleave him down.’

“ ‘ If,’ returned the other, coolly, ‘ to see your enemy at your feet, alone and sleeping, would give you any satisfaction, we can do as much.’

“ ‘ Where ? when ? how ? ’ hurriedly demanded the waivode.

“ ‘ In his tent — to-night — we are of his body guard ; it can be compassed, but our terms must first be subscribed.’

“ ‘ Propound them,’ said the waivode.

“ ‘ Our object is the Richter’s death ; — give us your oath, prince, that you will not depart the tent of Iwan, till the life-blood of one or other determine your difference.’

“ ‘ Gramercy ! good youth, but that’s letting me off easy,’ returned the waivode — ‘ I swear ! ’

“ ‘ Well, remember ! ’ cried the young champion.

“ The three then proceeded to mature their plan, and it was resolved to put it into execution that coming night. How the matter was arranged, it were tedious to detail : suffice it to mention, that, at midnight, the waivode found himself, in a compartment of the tent of his enemy. In the dark, and alone, he waited awhile the coming of his confederates, to conduct him to the help-

less couch of Iwan. Soon one entered, who, plucking him by the sleeve, instructed him to follow. Through a Daedalian labyrinth of canvass, and tent ropes, still in the dark, he tracked the steps of his companion: at length, they were stopped by a sort of arched doorway, deep within a wall of stone. Arrived beneath this porch, the guide of Peter indicated the handle of a narrow postern. ‘Enter boldly,’ he whispered, ‘I have cleared the coast: within, you will find the Richter — he sleeps.’

“The waivode accordingly pushed the door violently open, and rushed forward with drawn sword; but immediately he stopped short, blinded, by the blaze of innumerable pendant lamps that suddenly shone forth, shedding their light beyond the extended portal. He stood at the entrance of this long illuminated room, whose whole extent was flanked on either side, with officers and chieftains, glittering in the pomp, and pageantry of military array. At the extremity of the saloon, beneath a canopy of state, was seated the Richter Iwan, on an elevated dais, or platform. Peter seemed astounded, but only for a moment, for quickly rallying, and uttering the one word, betrayed! he dashed through the wide lane, formed by the surprised host; and, ere an eye could twinkle, reached the upper end of the apartment, where Iwan, who had instantly risen on his intrusion, stood self-possessed and calm. Already was the foot of Peter on the step of the dais, whilst his eagle eye searched out the Richter. In the same instant of time, the waivode’s unerring arm was uplifted, and his bright falchion was seen glancing in the torch light, as if, with the irresistible will of fate.

“‘Welcome, prince!’ cried Iwan, with a voice of composed, yet terrible grandeur, whilst, with proud humility, he raised, for an instant, the cap of maintenance from his head. Peter shrunk back. His piercing eyes receded in their sockets, and the extended arm and weapon, just raised to strike, sunk slowly by his side:—‘Welcome,

prince! Thou hast obtained that, which thou vauntedst, this morning, thou didst pant for, with such great eagerness. Encompassed with all the circumstance of war, environed by my guards and officers, thou settest eyes on that insulting springald, Richter Iwan.'

" All eyes were turned on the waivode, who, drawing himself proudly up, looked on the Richter with features, no longer evidencing any emotion, but cold and calm as marble.

" ' Devils luck ! thou, Iwan ! ' he gruffly muttered ; ' thou hast cast thy slough, though, young cockerel, since we last met,—well, let me begone ; thou wilt hardly detain me.'

" ' Not I ; albeit your oath may,' answered the vitez* sternly ; ' thou hast sworn, thou wouldst not leave my tent, till one or other of us, in mortal conflict, bite the dust. Thou shalt have thy heart's content—draw ! '

" ' My ignorance was in fault—gramercy ! I am not bound to do battle with the man who saved my life,' returned Peter, doggedly.

" ' As you are a knight, I charge you observe your knightly faith,' cried Iwan, with commanding energy ; ' I now defy thee, Peter ! commonly called the Bloody, to instant, and mortal debate, and proclaim thee apostate, renegade, and traitor. Deny my challenge, à l'outrance, and on those bifronted terms, I'll stick what's baser, and harder for man to bear,—perjury and cowardice ! and in God's light, will give thee out for a perjured coward. Here stands my foot,—there lies my glove.' And with these words, the Richter dashed down his iron gauntlet on the pavement.

" ' And I take it up, my hero,' cried Peter, the terrors of the thunder-cloud charging his brow as he spoke. ' Now, if I cleave thee down for this idle bravade,' he continued, ' as, despite the service thou hast rendered

* Vitez, hero.

me, I think, is not unlikely, your officers here will make light scruple, in sending my ghost to hunt thine, in Mano's shadowy realms.'

"' Not so, by Heaven! Prince,' exclaimed Iwan; ' my friends shall pawn their honours for just dealing. Moreover, here are six of my bravest warriors,—give them thy ring—bid them speed to thy camp, there to abide thy safe return, and send hither some trusty gentlemen, to give you the assurance of their being detained in custody; if thou faldest not fairly by this hand, let these, thy hostages, answer for it in any way, it may please thee to give orders. And perhaps, Prince,' he concluded, in a less stately tone; ' while this affair is arranging, you will deign to join myself and comrades, at our poor banquet.'

" To make short, after a gallant entertainment, the champions darrained for the fight. Both were merely mailed, *en blanco*, and armed only with their swords. The combat was not of long continuance; the experience, and skill of the waivode were, in vain, exerted against the superior temperance, and quick motions of Iwan. In vain, Peter would have availed himself of his giant strength, to close upon his antagonist. In a very short space of time, his ill-advised attempts cost him successively, three deep gashes, while the platform became a puddle of blood; but insensible, both of pain and fatigue, he continued to shower his weighty blows, as if urged by some mighty engine. Iwan, at length, with wary energy, received one of the passes of his adversary, on his arm, and, almost in the same instant, plunged his sword through the waivode's body, who fell prostrate, on the pavement, without groan or struggle.—Such, Count Ragotzy," concluded the keeper, " was the issue of this encounter, and such the merited fate of your friend—the far renowned, Peter the Bloody."

Ragotzy had listened to the foregoing relation, with his eyes fixed on the ground, in sullen silence, but

the blue lines of his forehead were swoln, with the contending emotions of his soul.—“I ought to mention,” presently subjoined the keeper, “that, on the following day, Peter’s horsemen passed over to the ranks of the Richter.”

“What, all?” demanded Ragotzy, in a tone of extreme irritation.

“Every man of them, I trow,” replied Swartz.

“My blood gets hot, at the mention of that Iwan,” said Ragotzy, adding, in somewhat of a hasty tone, and, for the first time, raising his eye — “Whence has he sprung?—what’s his parentage?”

“I cannot resolve you,” said Swartz. “‘*Boni viri et boni vini, non est querenda origo;*’* but ’tis not many years since the deceased Richter, whose power he wields, encountered him, a boy-adventurer, wandering along the sterile and rugged granze,† which lies between Turkey and that district, called of old, the Roman Dacia. He introduced him to his camp, and in him built up an edifice of honour, and renown. The lad won on the affection of the Richter, but not more than he did, on the Richter’s warriors, over whom he gained a complete ascendancy; so, after that chief’s decease, Iwan was unanimously proclaimed his successor.”

“I’ll crop his honours, one of these days, or know the reason.”

“Would you take my advice, you will avoid meeting, in bodily presence, lest, belike, you be sent to sleep with as bloody a bed-fellow, as yourself; but, to return to what we were before discussing—Will you join in league with me?”

“In what deep?” returned the count, after a long silence; “do you think to defy the cardinal’s perquisitions? since ’tis clear, if you connive, at the abduction of

* A familiar Hungarian proverb.

† Granze; frontiers.

his ward, not only in the streets of the capitol, but where there is air, more than to keep in life, in all this province, he is sure to pounce upon you. The search will be close and general."

"I know not that," said Swartz: "yet, in such a case, should I be taxing your lordship's hospitality too high, were I to resort to a certain forest of Hungary, or seek shelter, in one of those rifted lairs, where the Cyganian wolves lap the blood of their victims, not many leagues from Coloswar?"

It is not easy to conceive the astonishment of Ragotzy, at hearing this request. "By heavens!" he exclaimed, "You are the most extraordinary man, I ever encountered. What fiend hast thou in fee, to possess thee with thine incredible information? How came you acquainted with my connexion, with the brigands of that forest?"

The same distorted smile, or rather sneer, we have noted before, lit up the man's countenance as, repressing the comment that sprang to his lips, he simply made answer, "I cry you mercy, my lord; I named you not;" and then, after an instant, subjoined,—"am I to understand, it is a treaty?"

Ragotzy gave no reply, but mused in silence. Swartz suffered a minute to elapse, and then resumed: "Gad's mercy! Count Ragotzy, how canst hesitate? Perceive you not, that you alone will reap all the advantages, accruing from this negociation? Do I not offer to aid you with my sword, and counsel, in your present strait? Are not my character and life, at your discretion? whilst your relative position will be, by my means, incalculably bettered?" Still the mind of Ragotzy wavered, and in a state of tumultuous uncertainty, he kept silence. Again the voice of the keeper roused him from his gloomy abstraction. "I grant," he said, directing a somewhat bitter, and sneering glance at the Cygani, which, probably meant more than met the eye—"I grant, it will rest with me, some future day, to hand you over to

justice ; but, let me ask, were such my cue, might I not, at this instant, alarm the castle, and have you apprehended ?—I demand of you, is it a treaty ?”

“ It is,” answered the count, after having deliberated long in silence ; but he spoke, in that subdued voice and drawing tone, which almost implied a negative : and having thus signified his assent, he sunk into the stillness of deep thought. In his secret heart, Count Ragotzy was far from entertaining, with any satisfaction, the idea of joining in this sort of hasty copartnership with a man, whose cognizance of certain mysterious events, seemed, at least, as great as his own, and whose acquaintance with circumstances, referring peculiarly to himself, bordered on the miraculous.

It was some years before our history dates its commencement, that the count remembered to have occasionally beheld Swartz in Hermanstadt, anterior to the period, when he became the keeper of that insane young nobleman, to whom we have alluded.

The history of Count Rodna was melancholy. He went by the title, originally belonging to an unknown foreigner, in whose chateau, near the city of Coloswar, he had passed the earliest years of his life, and who was commonly reported, though probably on slight grounds, to have been his grandfather. The murder of his venerable benefactor, attended with circumstances of peculiar mystery and horror, had deeply affected the mind of the youthful Sigismund ; so much so, that when (a few days afterwards) Swartz arrived at the chateau, to conduct him across the country to the Cardinal Martinuzzi, to whose guardianship, it was said, the boy had been consigned, he found his charge already in a state of mental stupor, the sad repose of over-wrought nerves, and the incipient stage of the fatal malady, which, from that day to the era of our narrative, had not ceased to afflict the unhappy élève of Count Rodna.

The arrival of Swartz, with his charge, at Rothen-thorn,* (where, excepting during some rare, and flying visits to Hermanstadt, they had since resided,) happened subsequently to Ragotzy's departure from the capital.

" Yet," said the Cygani, internally, " the rascal is quite aware of my past pursuits, and half divines my present purpose. Well, I must needs rely on his good offices to a certain extent, though, as regards the bail he would fain encumber me with, I'd just as lief stand excused. Our people, indeed, arrogate the power of exorcising evil spirits out of swine and cattle; but as for casting out devils from the human species, I ween, it passes their wits-craft." Having dismissed the above train of thought, from his mind, he turned to the keeper: " Swartz," he said abruptly, and in the tone of haughtiness, which, from time to time, he assumed, " How soon can I have an interview with Hubert?"

" Do you, answered the keeper, give me the meeting, in the adjoining vestibule, at midnight, and, ere then, I doubt not to be able to compass the matter.—" Am I to expect you?"

Ragotzy was about to answer, when his attention was attracted, by the gradual elevation of a broad shadow of a human figure, upon the castle wall. The two started. The cowled head of Father Dominick, and afterwards his whole body, emerged into the upper air, within three yards of where they stood, by means of a narrow flight of stone steps, which formed a medium of communication, between that end of the gallery, and the court-yard of the castle. The ominous form had no sooner been descried, than it melted away from view, silently, and almost imperceptibly, as some vaporous exhalation of the earth, driven before the light morning wind, will dissolve

* Rothen-thorn, or pass of the Red Tower, distant a few miles south of Hermanstadt.

into air, as it rolls along. Rapidly, indeed, and like a shade, did the ghostly father glide by, on his way ; but in passing, from the gallery into the semicircular vestibule before mentioned, he paused, stooped, seemed to raise something from the ground, and then was lost to sight, ere either Swartz or the Brigand recovered from their amazement. Then, first, Ragotzy made a movement, as if to rush after him ; but the keeper plucked his sleeve, to hold him back. “ Benot rash,” he cried, “ or we are ruined. Fortunately he did not, I think, observe us. Why should you entail on yourself a similar fate to that of Hubert ? Your interests are mine : be guided in this by me, and I will point you out a path to vengeance, such as—but—this way—we meet at midnight.”

Ragotzy, after muttering some incoherent words, suffered himself to be led away, and he, and Swartz passed down the same stone staircase, which the fearful confessor had just ascended.

MANUSCRIPT V.

“Vexation and anguish accompany riches and honour: the pomp of the world and the favour of the people are but smoke, and a blast suddenly vanishing; which, if they commonly please, commonly bring repentance; and for a minute of joy, they bring an age of sorrow.”

PETR. RAV.

“Rex est, qui metuit nihil;
Hoc regnum sibi quisque dat.”

Chorus in the Thyestes of Seneca.

“Narrem Justitiam? resplendet gloria Martis
Armati referam vires? plus egit inermis.”

CLAUDIAN.

“Te doctus prisca loquentem,
Te matura senex audit, te fortia miles.”

CLAUDIAN.

“Exsectes, inculta dabant quas saecula, sylvis
Restituit terras, et opacum vitibus Istrum
Conserit.”

CLAUDIAN.

IT becomes now our agreeable duty, to transport our gentle reader to a short distance from the gallery, which we made the scene of the foregoing dialogue, between Count Ragotzy and Swartz. Let her fancy herself borne in our arms into the presence-chamber of the lord regent, and our very best obesiance having been performed, we will suppose, that, in the sweetest tones imaginable, she has intimated her grateful sense of the trouble, we have

given ourselves. Indeed, most amiable young lady, we consider it no trouble whatever, “The labour we delight in physics pain;” but hark ! the prompter calls to order : —*iēcov διοίγω* !*

The guests had departed — the glittering throng of warriors and nobles, singly, or in twos and threes, had slowly left the presence — the last lingering envoy had adjusted, to his satisfaction, the difficulty, which had detained him, and had made his last act of reverence ; and an unwonted silence, only the more impressive, on account of the previous hum, and busy evidence of life, reigned throughout the citadel. It settled on the magnificent apartment, where had been held the levee of the lord regent, who, alone, of all the splendid group, which so lately filled that lofty architectural hall to overflowing, lingered on the spot, like its incorporated spirit. This hall had lately been elaborately decorated, and was truly grand in scale, and rich in adornment. The walls were of oak, and pannelled with mouldings, corresponding in design, with the splendid oriel window of shafted stone work, “dyed with the soft chequering of a sleepy light,” and filled with painted glass, where the sun-beams glimmered dimly, through scenes, representing, and illustrating the miracles of our Redeemer. The ribbed arches of the lofty roof were richly wrought, and crossed each other in numerous compartments. The effect of the whole, emblazoned, as it was, with armorial achievements and insignia, viewed, in its “awful perspective,” from either extremity, was inconceivably grand, and imposing. On the west side of the hall, a private door opened upon a spiral staircase, that gave access to the lord cardinal’s suite of apartments.

On that day, the courtiers (mostly foreign) had vied with one another, in their marked deference of manner, towards Martinuzzi. Not an ambassador, but who

* Sophocles — literally, “Behold, I open !” in allusion to the *ἐκκύκλημα*, or mode of shifting the scene, on the Greek stage.

had signified the friendly disposition of his respective sovereign. The stoled ecclesiastic — the gallant veteran, “bearded like a pard,” whose very name sounded like an alarum, — and the stripling chief, emulous of the other’s honourable career — the well-caparisoned knight, “whose only talisman was his sword,” — and the proud graf, who could number a long, and unbroken line of noble ancestry, whose chivalrous deeds might have illustrated, for centuries, the history of Hungary — one and all, on that day, had done homage to the genius, if not to the rank, of Martinuzzi ; and not a few had intimated, in terms, which could not admit of misconstruction, that, in the present juncture of affairs, there was only one arm in Hungary, potent to wield her sceptre — only one man, upon whose head, her sacred crown ought to descend. But these flattering testimonies sounded, on Martinuzzi’s ear, like something false and hollow ; and when he looked around him, in hopes of descrying some nobleman, or chieftain of native growth, whose order constituted the real strength, and pride of Hungary, it was only rarely, and “far between,” that this eye lit on such. Unfortunately, from natural affection towards those, who, without reserve, applauded his elevation, the regent, after his memorable overthrow of his foreign and domestic enemies, had suspended many of the magnats from military offices, which they had previously filled, with the approval of their countrymen, and (with the single exception of Valentine Count Turascus) had substituted, in the principal commands, men, who, whatever might be their deserts, were strangers in the land, and whose names or titles sounded dissonantly to the ears of an Hungarian. This was a step, which, by depositing the seeds of party and faction, in the prejudices and strong corporate spirit of the native aristocracy, proved the source of much future calamity. For years after the adoption of an expedient, which accused, in some measure, the prescient eye of Martinuzzi, that prelate bitterly

repented its impolicy. He had, thereby, certainly rendered the external surface of his administration more fair and entire ; but, in spite of its commanding posture, and aspect of authority, its moral foundations were silently crumbling from beneath it. The final issue shall presently be unfolded. It may, however, be just necessary to observe, that on that day, Martinuzzi found cause to regret, more deeply than he had ever before done, having embraced so unfortunate a measure. He had indulged very sanguine hopes, that all parties, at whatsoever sacrifice of individual interest, would have been glad to unite, in a common scheme of defence, against a common enemy, and, oblivious of past causes for alienation, and distrust, without hesitation, would have ranged themselves, in so critical a state of affairs, under his standard. But the prejudices and hostilities of an aristocracy, possessing such mighty, and independent authority, could not be quietly inurned, at a moment's warning, however pressing, and arduous the conjuncture ; and so it was, that even their sense of the enormities, which would otherwise be enacted,—the dread apprehension of the utter ruin, and subversion of their country (whose extent might be virtually measured, by the walls of the metropolis), did not reconcile the exiled patriots, assembled in Hermanstadt, to Martinuzzi's rule, although, had the nation been united and resolved, that authority and genius, which had hitherto surmounted all difficulties, were admitted to be equal to the exigency of affairs.

That very day, the regent, in hopes of conciliating his enemies, had lent a willing ear to the proud solicitations of Queen Isabella, that he would appoint one of her creatures, (by name, Mirce), to a post of considerable trust, in the city of Coloswar, vacant, by the mysterious evanishment of Count Oldimar, one of the castellans of that fortress. But the magnats of Erdely were not so to be reconciled, at the eleventh hour; their standing feud, or hereditary patriotism, might not be intermitted ; and

notwithstanding the regent's unrivalled talents for government, although placed at the head of a well-organized, and adventurous body of men, who, he knew, would prove their fidelity to the last, he felt, as though the hasty structure of his power tottered to its foundation, from the disheartening conviction, that it rested not on its broad, and proper basis.

On that day, Martinuzzi had summoned to his aid, all his occult power of stealing on the affections, and whilst the enthusiasm of his eloquence elicited the sympathy of his auditors, and inspired the passions, which, he felt, he had stamped upon their memory, a never-dying impression of his incomparable abilities. He had confirmed his friends in their confidence. The timid were heartened: the neutral, and wavering secured: those who were too eager for his usurpation, or who might have expressed themselves too incautiously to that effect, were gently reined back, without finding their affections alienated, or their hopes diminished. He knew how to distinguish between men, who adhered to his cause, from attachment to his person, or who stood by him, as being the constitutional rallying point of the lords of Hungary, and those adventurers, who bore arms, under the shadow of his standard, merely in consideration of the distinction, or greater licence and plunder, which so desperate a service seemed to hold out. To the first class his manner was, beyond expression, bland, and courteous. To the patriot, his language teemed with enthusiasm, and inspiration, being notwithstanding, firm, dignified, and uncompromising. In a strain of eloquence, that carried away all hearts, and which bound down the unwilling mind to conviction, he inveighed against the past, and present insidious policy of Austria; and insinuated his doubts, that neither the mountains, nor reciprocal terror, would much longer prove a barrier from her aggression.*

* Germania à Dacis (i. e. Hungary and Transylvania), mutuo metu aut montibus separatur.—Germ. Tacitus.

Then, on the other hand, pointing to the creed of the Prophet, as involving the principle of universal dominion, he declared, that the Moslem crescent, was the land-mark of Africa, and that it darkly delineated the geography of those regions, which lay between the river of Egypt, and the Atlantic, and the great desert. He exclaimed, in the words of Daniel—"The abomination of desolation is in the holy place;" and after showing, that the same ensign cast the shadow of its despotism over Asia, since the civil, and religious sceptre of the oriental world, was held by the great Turk, his mind misgave him, he said, when he reflected on that renown, which, converging its rays from the east and from the south, streamed, like a comet, over astonished Europe. He exposed the rapid, and extensive conquests of Soliman, that vigilant and sagacious sultan, whose eye, from the palace of his seraglio, pervaded the vast extent of his dominions, in three quarters of the globe. He demonstrated, from the position of the sinking state, whose narrow bounds were encircled and pressed by a hostile line on every side, that, unless their measures were concerted with prudence, and prosecuted with no less promptitude; the province of Transylvania must speedily be swallowed up, in the collision of the rival, and conflicting empires; and finally, he called upon all true Hungarians to rally round the beautiful oriflamme, upheld by a nation's rights, her liberties, and her faith.

He deprecated the idea, of his ever having been governed, by any other motives, than those of honour, patriotism, and the exaltation of the church; and, alluding to the reports, so industriously circulated, of his design to make himself king, he complained of them, as a cruel, and unfounded calumny, incompatible with his principles, and utterly at variance, with the whole tenor of his life.

"Verily, gentlemen," said Martinuzzi, in conclusion; "the crown, I covet, is a heavenly crown; and, after a sufficient experience of the unsatisfactory nature of what

the world calls glory, casting my view towards a brighter prospect, I sigh for the repose of a cloister.” To such as, he guessed, had joined his service, in order to advance their own selfish, and separate ends, how little soever solicitous about his failure, or success, he had already been liberal in his appointments; and if he dilapidated, by his donatives, the treasure, or rather the indigence, of the state, and exhausted those revenues, already too much impoverished, he might be allowed to be still more profuse, in his praises, and promises, and to lavish “without circumspection or restraint,” all sorts of encouragements over the future. An address to this purport, which derived, perhaps, its chief effect, from that irresistible fervour, so natural to the mind of Martinuzzi, made the desired impression on his audience. There was hardly an individual, who came into the lord regent’s presence, on the day we commemorate, but, who left him, knit to his cause, and devoted to his interests, by one of the strongest of all ties, that of affection and respect, based on their common hopes, and common policy.*

The position, which Martinuzzi occupied, at that moment, in the eye of Europe, was most interesting, and strikes us, when we look back on it, with an air of magnificence. If high renown, the universal admiration of his contemporaries, exalted rank, and well-earned opulence,—if a kingdom at his disposal, backed by the Pope’s Bull, as one recompense of a life of abstinence and virtue,—if the respect of every crowned head in Europe for a character, whose dangerous importance, the voice of envy could do no more than magnify,—if his own consciousness of surpassing inward endowments, which, by a happy, but rare conjunction, combined the most profound acquirement, and commanding reach of mind, with an unwearied, patient, and eagle-eyed energy of thought,—if genius, at once brilliant and correct, seeming almost an emanation

* Τίκτουσι γὰρ σῦνοιαν ἐλπίδες κοινάι.—ΑΠΠΙΑΝ.

from the superior intellect,—if this felicitous combination of rare endowment, did not ensure as much happiness, as was proper to a devout and holy man, his attached followers and friends greatly deceived themselves. They argued that,

“ In their own hearts the earnest of the hope,
Which made them great, the good will ever find.”*

His serenity and spiritual peace were, on the occasion we refer to, reflected on the regent's countenance. Every syllable of his towering oratory, bespoke a mind at ease; and whilst all the sensibilities of his noble nature were awakened, as he depicted the wretched condition of his country, with breakers a-head, and drifted from her anchors; all could discern, or fancied they saw, the honest pride of virtue strengthen him, in the reflection, that his was the voice to calm the moral tempest, and that it was his province, to guide the helm, through so intricate a navigation, as lay before the vessel of the state.

— Incumbat si turbidus Auster, et unda
Pulset utrumque latus: posito certamine nautæ
Contenti meliore manu, sese que ratemque
Unius imperiis tradunt, artemque pavore
Confessis finem studiis fecere procellæ.†

And now, Martinuzzi remained alone in that regal hall, so lately crowded with the gaiety and gallantry of youth, and the wisdom, or piety of maturer years. He was left alone,—alone, with his glory and gladness! Ah! well might the preacher question, whether the eminent of their age, whom the shallow world is wont to deem the favourites of fortune, view, in their secret soul, the distinction, in the light of a happiness.‡ Martinuzzi was

* Shelley.

† Claud. *Laus Serenæ*.

‡ *Et ceux que vous regardez comme les heureux du siècle, sont ils toujours tels à leur propres yeux?—MASSILLON.*

seated at the council table, busily engaged, with certain state-papers, arranged before him. Some he turned over, with a hasty glance, and on others, he appeared to dwell, as if their contents had been of greater moment.

From the paths of blood,—and such, for the most part, is the history of the turbulent era of our narrative,—it is grateful to turn aside, in order to contemplate the display of genius and of virtue.—It is pleasing to repose, if only for a moment, on so magnanimous and beautiful a character, as that of Martinuzzi; and in this view, we are here tempted to make our readers more intimately acquainted with him. Nature had enriched the person of Martinuzzi with the choicest endowments. He was, as historians inform us, one of the handsomest men of his time. His stature, although above the middle height, never struck the beholder as being tall. His deportment was eminently graceful; he was uncommonly well built, and capable of enduring considerable fatigue. His face was a perfect oval; his eyes, a deep and melancholy blue, replete with the most touching sensibility, were strongly indicative of the prevailing thoughtfulness of his nature, although, when his soul spake through those eyes, with all the energy of genius, or when they lit up, in sympathy with his native eloquence, nothing could exceed the piercing brilliancy of their expression, alike calculated to lighten the heart of suffering innocence, and to appal the guilty, or abash the oppressor—“*Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos.*” In his Roman nose, and slightly distended nostrils, the determination, and force of his nature sat conspicuous. The lordly expanse of his beautiful, and pellucid brow denoted the *mens divinior*, which it curtained. The admirable curve of his lips, the very seat of charity, and the rounded dimpled chin (whose contour, when lovely, is so characteristic of an amiable disposition,) bespoke, in George Martinuzzi, the singular gentleness and benignity of his nature. One remarkable feature, however, we must not forget, if we would complete the *vraisemblance* of our

portrait. The right ear of Martinuzzi, ever since he arrived at the age of manhood, was distinguished by a tuft of dark hair.* He appeared, at this period, to have scarcely seen half a century ; but it is probable, that the onerous cares and anxieties of state had somewhat anticipated the furrowing touch of time.

On the occasion, when we first introduced him to our readers, the cardinal was arrayed in the sumptuous, and splendid vestments, befitting a high dignitary of the Catholic church,† and the effect, which they produced, was as imposing, as could well be conceived. He wore a pelisse of massive gold tissue, thrown over a sort of tunic of embroidered velvet, likewise superbly tissued, and of the colour of violet, edged round with the richest point lace. A golden mitre, upon a white ground, rested on his head ; his shoes were of crimson satin, and a diamond of highest price, in the form of a buckle, sparkled from either foot. The throne, or chair of state, on which he reclined, having embroidered cushions of crimson velvet, was surmounted by a canopy of solid gold.

What thoughts Martinuzzi had under this gorgeous attire, it were perhaps fearful to unfold ; nevertheless, with the reader's indulgence, we shall attempt it. After occupying himself, for a brief space, in arranging certain state-papers, and noting down occasionally any idea, which suggested itself, in regard to their contents, Martinuzzi, at length, abruptly laid the pen aside, and, after a pause, gave voice, in a low and subdued tone, to a train of ideas, in which hitherto he had silently indulged. His broken, and interrupted speech indicated the throes of feeling, struggling for deliverance,—the spontaneous unburthening of a soul, wound up to its highest tension,—of a heart, almost bursting with emotions, that for long, “ like the

* Dextram auriculam ejus qua naturali adnato pilosa erat, etc.—
ISTHUAFF.

† ὡς νυμφιον ἱερατευομενον στεφανω.

ocean's tide, was shut up with doors."* The indignant waters roared and chafed—

Nunc lapides adesos
Stirpes que raptas et pecus et domos
Volventis una. †

" Well!"—in such broken array was his reverie marshalled—" well, the day breathed at last. The shadows fled away; the blue and vigorous air did shake its wings; the blithe, immortal day, grew young again; the bat retired to his chamber of delicious darkness, to rest from his vigils of the night; the church-yard graves yawned, and received back their restless tenantry; the contemplative owl forsook his tower, and reposes in security, till the darkness again call him to his stated occupation;—all—all, whose affairs, like mine, and nameless work, walk by midnight,—all but me! I—I alone, of all the solitary things, that hate the insulting light, know not whereinto I may rush, that, with the mantle of a capacious mist, I might envelope me. I cannot, when the sickly stars are out, flee, like the rest, to loathsome charnels; I cannot, when the tedious, toilsome night is over, wrap me up awhile, and, in concealment, slumber away from day, or sit upon the earth, with open eyes, counting the lazy minutes until eve, companioned by majestic silence; I must not fly my soul, nor my soul me; no unthought-of chamber, cut out of marble—no silent tabernacle, proffers its sanctuary to me—no church-yard *asyla* will hallow my consciousness. For me, there is no shadow, in the day-shine, from the heat, no covert from the storm, no place of refuge from the tyranny of eyes, that repress, and hedge me round.—Hush!"

Here, recalled, by the very excess of his feelings, the regent glanced jealously, and hurriedly around him.

" No!" he muttered, in answer to his own thoughts, and then again peered into the perilous depths of his

* Job.

† Horace.

soul, taking up the thread of his reflections, where he had dropped it. "I must go forth," he proceeded, in an indistinct murmur, "amid the garish haunts of this familiar life — go forth erect, as if, under my distracting purple, no livid spot deformed me. Oh ! I must smooth, and torture my countenance, with deceiving smiles, regulate my pulse-throb, modulate my very tones — ay, tutor my tongue in the insolence of words, ere I let the traitors escape my lips. God ! my brain may burn, my heart may batte and break, no one heeds ; for neither thought, nor feeling must find repose in me. Oh ! thou bright fruit, gilded by young ambition, to be plucked from the aspiring branch, I have clutched thee, indeed ; but, ah ! the leap hath hurt my precious soul. Like to the apples of Asphaltes,* thou wert most fair to the eye, but bitterness, and ashes to the taste."

Martinuzzi ceased ; and, flinging himself into his seat, seemed overpowered, by inward emotion. Then, after awhile, he lifted up his head, and continued to soliloquize aloud.

"I remember me, when I was a boy, I could dream, through the weariless summer-day, in high and holy abstractions, with love of kind, and country. To my thought, the solid globe grew animate, and vocal : beautiful the misty twilight then, sank on the wind-swept shore. Oh ! with what syllables of tender and eternal mystery, did the softest notes of falling waters harmonize silence to my heart. Ah ! in the minstrelsy of hope, all sounds and sights of life's diurnal round enkindled omens, and mystic meanings of the future—bright personifications, as in an elder day. Night, sublime, walked the pale rocks ; and the blessed sunshine, that rode upon the summer mist, was mildest. Banquet of peace, unbought !

* See Notes to the third Canto of Childe Harold ; or Tacitus, Histor. i.
5. 7.

and the transparent goblet ! Yellow-haired Morning, and the weeping wild rose, how ye did charm me ! And how from pride, and pomp, and mere human grandeur, my fancy framed an idol ! But what have these enamoured oracles of youth—what have they all come to ? Why did I grow out of them ? Would that I could have remained for aye, by Alicia's side, straying, with book in hand, amid the groves,* a guiltless, dreamy, unsophisticated boy, instead of—oh God ! now—poor, most poor, with abundance !”† and Martinuzzi clinched his two hands, with fearful agony. “ Now,—fame, and dignity, and sceptred power, are like the furies ; and all freshness of the heart, the mildest moisture of the dew of life, makes their dire aliment. ‡ The air, I breathe, comes coffined up in sepulchres ; the quilts, I lie on, are too sumptuous, too filled with gossamer, to yield their spell ; the viands all are delicate, too much for food, and in digestion turn to aconite ; the flowing chalice mantles to the brim, with ‘ gall of asps ;’§ all language is a lie ; the thoughts, which I endure are damnable ; where'er I set my foot is strewed with aspicks ; the life, I hold is death’s eternal torture. Oh, God ! in what, after all, is my glory ? Can *this* be glory ? Oh ! if this be *being*, better, a thousand times better, were extinction. No, no—Tush ! I forget, I have one secret consciousness sweetening this hell upon earth ; and for the rest, great God ! I am myself the error. *Fiat voluntas tua !*”

Here Martinuzzi slid down from the throne, and, clasping his hands tightly, knelt on the golden footstool, fastened to the seat ; his lips, for awhile, faintly stirring with internal prayer, seemed like the leaves of autumn shivering in the night-wind, when, wrapping his face in his gorgeous mantle, his devotions came to a pause, or,

* Tantôt, un livre en main, errant dans les prairies.—BOILEAU.

† Inopem me copia fecit.—Ovid. *Metam.*

‡ See the Euripides of Æschylus.

§ Job, ch. xx. ver. 14.

if he still held communion with Heaven, he *thought* his orisons, and became, to all appearance, calm as silent. From this posture of musing quietude, he was presently roused, by a footstep striding along the hall, and the shadow of a man fell on the wainscot, beyond the regal chair. He looked up, and having recognized the intruder, exclaimed, in a deep, low, ghostly voice, “ ‘Tis even he! oh, God ! who shall gainsay thy judgments ? It is most meet, that I feel thy penance for the sin of my parent, and that his presence bring a tribe of fiends to minister to thy wrath. Yet, lie still awhile, oh my torn heart ! I am nothing else but regent.”

In saying these words, Martinuzzi arose, and, while deep, calm thought alone was pourtrayed upon his passionless countenance, advanced to meet the intruder, who pursued his impetuous course, to and fro, without heeding the regent’s approach. The individual, we mention, was clad in weeds of mourning. One would not predicate, from his juvenile aspect, that he had reached his majority ; probably he had not. His stature exceeded the middle height of man ; his features, though wild, were strikingly handsome ; and his long sable locks flowed negligently over his shoulders. Martinuzzi came up to him, and, grasping his hands within his own, whilst his eyes grew vivid with sensibility, he said, “ Sigismund ! my son ! ” The other gazed vacantly, but made no answer.

Martinuzzi continued,—“ You leave Rothenthorn so rarely, that when you do visit Hermanstadt, you are to blame to keep yourself so close. The grandson of Count Rodna should not so slight his guardian.”

“ Prithee, your eminence,” returned Sigismund, “ who is Count Rodna’s son ? Is he one of the eternal lazars house of Italy or France, they tell me, you saddle, on the broad shoulders of fair Erdely ? Make us acquainted, I beg of you, that is, an you promise me his countship will bear with my humours ? for I have no notion of your

mettlesome grafts, who spar for every trifle. The eyes of the Lady Czerina, or your highness's buckles, will set the magnates of your court cock-a-hoop in an instant, and 'tis heigh-ho for a tilting bout, though, for aught they can know, or your eminence will swear to, the brilliancy of one or other may be but counterfeit. I hope I speak no treason."

A slight shade passed across the fine countenance of Martinuzzi. There was a pause.

"Did you walk hither, with the intention of seeking me?" inquired the regent, coldly.

"Perhaps I may have," answered the youth, in a tone of indifference. "We ever like to look on the outward prototype of our frequent, and internal meditations. To stand in the shoes of the late king, which in others had been dangerous, in your eminence looks honour. What, in a madman, (myself, for instance,) had been usurpation, in Martinuzzi were only lawful rule; and though it be high treason for a subject to compass St. Stephen's crown, in Martinuzzi it will be patriotism, for so the cardinal most solemnly gives it out, and he is esteemed as holy, and as reverend a man as any in the land. We see, you are reverend: you have the phylacteries of your profession inscribed, in glittering characters, on your front. The blind might spy you out, at a distance, as they would a civet cat. Your vestments might put Soliman to flight, as erst the pomp of St. Leon did the Goth.* I'd credit your eminence for a tun of reverence, but in respect to your holiness, or belike I rate you too highly, 'tis comparable to my poor wits, I trow, — a grain, and to spare."

Martinuzzi hid his face in the palm of his hands, and moaned audibly. The lips of Sigismund were curled, even to scorn, as with bitterness he proceeded—

"Dost practise howling, your highness? Nay, then,

* Alluding to the rout of Attila, occasioned by the imposing appearance of the pontifical train.

thou'l top thy part one day, and they'd best grow cotton betimes in Tophet, if they'd spare their teeth. Resolve me, most sapient Pharisee—think'st thou, the soul, if melted at last to penitence, could gush out tears enough to make a flood so mighty, as, in the course of time, might wipe away the stains of regicide?"

Martinuzzi looked up, and with an air of mild, and sad composure, answered—"I hope so, Sigismund. I believe so, with God—"

"Ay, ay; but not with man, sir," rejoined the youth, with stern significance. "Not all the tears contrition ever shed, can wash out treason:—with God, you say? Well, with God—I hope so too."

Another pause ensued, which was broken by Martinuzzi again demanding the cause of his being favoured with his companion's visit?

"It was here, but now, my lord," replied Sigismund, putting his finger to his forehead, "and, hey! presto, 'tis gone! Your eminence is such good company, and so facetious, withal, you would corrupt the memory of a saint, and, i'troth, mine is none of the readiest. When I find myself in the presence of your mightiness, for the life of me, my head can only compass the single idea of your eminence's transcendent qualities. But I cry you pardon:—was not St. Peter, in his day, bishop of Rome, your highness?"

"Even so," said Martinuzzi.

"I have been thinking," rejoined Sigismund, "that his holiness must have thought his translation to the janitorship of heaven, a happy preferment; and, egad, if being head-jailor, in these dominions, would qualify you, for an assistant of his saintship, your eminence, after all, need not despair of the appointment, when he wearies of his office. By the way, I would have an order to traverse your Tartarus, beneath the citadel, most reverend Pluto!"

"Sigismund, you surprise me," said the regent; "those,

who are now in the dungeons, are mostly confined there, for treasonable practises."

"Perhaps so," rejoined the youth; "yet when Heaven has cast up his account, some of them, I surmise, will be called to an easy reckoning."

"In what respect can they, or their habitation concern you?" inquired Martinuzzi.

"Why, in sooth, not greatly," replied the youth: "shall I say my body's lead, and I've too much phlegm; or, that the antics of human nature are so wild, and various,—so modified by circumstance,—that I should like to join in a game of bo-peep below; nay, I recommend to your eminence, the experiment. You've no notion what a spell 'twould cast, o'er your downy couch, were you to look on the flinty pillow of the wretched:—perhaps, one day, or I stumble in judgment, you'll learn the secret. From the captive, triumphing in his fetters, to the tyrant, festering on his stool, there's more stern stuff, in the core of human hearts, than your wise men dream of. Your fool has known as much as this, many a day, and oft; but who would heed a fool's philosophy, to rail is his vocation, and there's an end on't. Lend me your hand, my lord."

Martinuzzi held forth his right hand, to the lunatic young nobleman, who, taking it within his own, and carefully examining its lineaments, went on, in the same incoherent strain, as before.

"A fair hand this,—a fair, and honourable hand, the parasites of a court would tell ye; but, Luke Swartz reckoned palmistry too deep a study, for one o'my wits, so I never was taught it—'twere like casting pearls before swine, as the learned express it, which, methinks, were a thankless office. Nathless 'tis a good hand, and this gem sets it off hugely. Is it of price?—but that I need not ask,—I thank you, sir."

In saying these last words, the young count removed a ring, from off one of the fingers of the cardinal, and

put it on his own. It was a plain gold one, bearing the regent's cipher.

"What mean you, Sigismund? return me my ring; you trouble me, my son," said Martinuzzi, with some warmth.

"Gramercy, then, but I am grown powerful, my lord, to trouble him that troubles a whole kingdom. For your ring, to-morrow, I will restore it, to-morrow, your eminence. There's magic in't, in the interim, and 'twill serve as well as the voice of Hungary's regent, whom I were a traitor, to take from the business of the state, even for the passing of an hour." Thus saying, Sigismund sprung off to the further end of the room.

At that moment, the seneschal entered, and, after addressing a few words to Martinuzzi, withdrew; and presently, a young female was ushered into the hall, who, with a modest, but perfectly self-possessed air, advanced towards the regent; and, with tears starting into her eyes, gracefully cast herself at his feet:—"Mercy! mercy!" she exclaimed.

"What is your suit?" inquired Martinuzzi, with some slight perturbation of manner, and a scarcely perceptible tremor, in the tones of his voice: "Mercy, unto whom? what would you, maiden?"

"Share my father's dungeon, and his danger," answered the female; and resisting all the attempts of Martinuzzi to raise her up, she hurriedly continued: "Last night, my father was apprehended, by your orders."

"On what charge?" asked Martinuzzi, in his wonted mild tones.

"I cannot say," answered Veronica, for the damsel was no other; "it is no concern of mine, since, were he the worst of criminals, I am his daughter, your eminence:" and then Veronica, in anxiety to obtain her suit, poured forth all the eloquence of her nature, without reserve, and the genius of filial love, which was her soul's essence, lent power and energy, to every plea she urged.

At last, not perceiving any signs of relenting, in the manner of Martinuzzi, she paused, for a sudden fear thrilled her bosom. "You cannot mean, that he should die?" she exclaimed, and her quivering lip betokened the agony, struggling in her heart: "Or, is he dead? Yes, you have murdered him!"

"Prithee rise, my child," said Martinuzzi, in the gentlest accents, that ever issued from the lips of authority, "your father lives; his cause of imprisonment shall be looked to: arise!"

"No, I will beg, till my knees take root i'the earth," returned the maiden, while, lifting her clasped hands, with a look of supplication, she retained a position, as graceful as ever, the genius of sculpture wrought from Parian marble. There was, indeed, something in her sweet countenance, upraised, and every feature working with her impassioned, and fervid pleading, that, ("not to speak it profanely") might have reminded a spectator of the celebrated head of the Minerva.* "My lord, my lord," she continued, whilst her sweet speech flowed from her ruddy lips, in streams of liquid melody: "Oh! let the vaulted pavement, which encloses my father's crime and wretchedness, lift up, that I may partake the living burial of his solitude."

Martinuzzi meditated for a moment, ere he made answer, "Daughter, you have your request."

If Veronica was silent, her eyes, glistening with those tears, with which the overflowing of her heart supplied them, gave token of greater thanks, than the utmost eloquence of language could express.

"I apprehend, however," continued the cardinal, "according to the prison regulations, that you cannot remain after the vesper-bell toll; but rise, virtuous maiden," he added, at the same time taking her hand in his, to assist her, from her supplicating posture: "I owe it to your

* That in the Florence gallery.

merit to declare, that, by means, you wot not of, you have secured a friend, to your father's house, at his uttermost need. I am interested in thy fate, my child, more so, than I shall tell you, at present. Would that thy sire's vacillating, and unstable nature, owned somewhat of thy metal!" Then, meeting Veronica's look of surprise, with an almost parental smile, he proceeded in a low voice: "Ah! there must be more matter in thy recreant creed, than I dreamt of, heretofore. By the lady! 'tis a rare heresy; but I'll have thee back, nevertheless, to the veritable fold."

The astonishment of Veronica, at these words, was strongly depicted in her countenance. How had the lord regent penetrated the nature of her religious opinions? — a secret she believed to be confined to herself and parent. Her soft eyes, ever vocal with intelligence, sought an explanation, and Martinuzzi, presently again spoke:—

" 'Twas your mother's error, child; but, with the blessing of Heaven, the defection shall stop here." — Veronica's amazement increased, and her heart palpitated, with apprehension, but she would not trust herself to speak:—" In all else," continued the regent, your mother was an excellent lady," — Veronica started—" only herein, her knowledge wrought to her destruction, and the very inquisitiveness of human reason proved the snare of her soul: but, I will extricate thee, thou blessed shoot of a frail stem, from the toils, which entangled the daughter of Baron Walstein."

" Mysterious Heaven!" exclaimed Veronica; " how have you discovered the relationship, which subsisted betwixt me and her, who is a soul in bliss?"

" She was the cousin, and sworn friend, of the Princess Beatrice," answered Martinuzzi. " Alas! I knew her well."

" Oh God! then you knew, you *know* my father," cried Veronica, with a scream of awakened terror, as she

sunk down, again, on the pavement; and, uplifted her clasped hands, as if in deprecation of the regent's wrath.

"Damsel," he replied; "were certain parties, in Hermanstadt, aware of my having the outlaw in fetters, his life were not worth so much, as a beggar's ransom; but cheer thee, my child,"—and Martinuzzi again upraised the bewildered girl—"cheer thee, I say: whatever be thy father's subsequent crimes, let him answer for them, at the bar of Heaven. As respects his outlawry, I have cognition, that he was unjustly dealt by. I know him, for certain, to be as innocent, as was her royal brother, of the abduction, and death of the Princess Beatrice."

"What do I hear?" exclaimed Veronica, "Transporting assurance! My father stands acquitted, by the suffrage of Hungary's regent,—my lord, HE told you. Ha! you then,—yes, you must have spoken with *Him*. If I had but breath, I'd ask, was't the Graf, Peter Pereny, told you?"

"That's to be put to question, with a witness!" said a voice from behind, with startling abruptness. The maiden turned her eyes, and Sigismund was seen emerging, from the embrasure of a window, whither he had retired.

"An thou wilt, to it again," continued the youth; "thou shalt be ordained high priestess of heatheness, and shrine his eminence. Beshrew, my fantasy! if thou hast not chalked thy face guardy, like any mime, and, were my tongue the sacring bell, my lovely transcendental saint here, could not look more stricken:—are ye turned marble both, to save your monuments? What have I spoken, sweetheart? *J'ai des lunes*, as monsieur puts it; but I never bite, never." The head of Veronica fell abashed; and, confounded at an address, so startling from its suddenness, she, in silence, turned away. She regretted the circumstance of her father's outlawry, having been proclaimed, in the hearing of a third party, of whom her fancy, as his features were bent on hers, seemed to recal some memory, as in a dream.—His equivocal

conduct alarmed her, and she looked at the cardinal, for protection. That prelate had been for awhile so occupied, with his fair solicitor, as, to have quite forgotten the proximity of Count Rodna, and he was recalled to a consciousness of that individual's presence, with an abruptness, that was displeasing.

Notwithstanding his being accustomed to Sigismund's random, and adventurous sallies, his pungency of remark, on that morning, made a more lively impression on him, than ordinary. The peculiar infirmity of this young nobleman prompted him "to run a-muck and tilt at all he met." Still, though he would foin, with might and main, no heed was commonly given to his thrusts; his bitterness of invective, serving only to establish the fact of his mental alienation. But, during his brief colloquy, with Martinuzzi, the distempered language of Sigismund conveyed a meaning, sufficiently significant, and there lurked an inexplicable "method in his madness," which did not escape the penetration of the cardinal. The consequence was one of those chilling revulsions of the mind, that jar "the electric chain," connecting the opposite extremes of feeling, and which, thrilling along, over a thousand links in the memory of the past, would be apt, in any case, to emasculate the spirits, and affect them, with no common degree of sadness, but Martinuzzi had still a stronger cause for the depression, which attacked him, and with which he could, with difficulty cope. A series of retrospections of most mysterious, and dreadful import rose, in all their inscrutable darkness, to his mind, and their deduction came upon him with the force, at once, and the vivacity of a flash of lightning,

" And every slack'ned fibre, dropt its hold,
Like nature letting down the springs of life."*

It now rushed, with tenfold force, upon his guardian's

* Dryden.

memory, that, on Sigismund's occasional tarryance in Hermanstadt, his presumed aberration of mind, made him free of the citadel; and, more particularly, of Martinuzzi's suite of apartments. None ever cared to inquire whether the lad continued to inhabit the Tour rouge, or were on a visit to his guardian. He had the most perfect impunity of locomotion, and might do or say, whatever he listed, since no doubt was entertained, by any person, of his intellects being greatly impaired.

"If he have been acting all this while," mused Martinuzzi, whilst strong sweat broke upon his forehead; "I must have been suspected, and betrayed, misapprehended, and have been slumbering on the precipice of fate, whilst that clear fame, which is dear to my heart, as is the blood, that bubbles there:—but oh! impossible, it cannot be—'tis an idle thought: yet there's a strong impediment here, which weighs me to the earth,—it is the error of my blood, whose current runs more sullen than of old. However, I'll look into his humour. So much is at least due to my safety, my honour, the boy's rights, and welfare,—his father's memory." And, with this intention, Martinuzzi expelled, for the present, the ungracious bode-ment.

What has taken our tardy pen so long to explain, was, to the mind of Martinuzzi, the result of a minute's thought, but even, in so brief a space of time, his apprehensions had stamped their dreadful character, upon every miniature of his features, literally, in the words of Sigismund, chalking his guardian's face like any mime. Martinuzzi, however, resolved to confine his newly-awakened suspicion to his own bosom; he, therefore, merely observed, in a tone of forced composure: "I thought, Sigismund, you had left the hall;" and again addressing himself to Veronica, whose eloquent eyes, bent on the ground, refused to glisten through their silken fringes, he said, "We'll renew our talk hereafter. I will now, my daughter, give you what you

asked of me," and he turned away, to trace the required order. In the meanwhile, Sigismund launched forth, in that flighty style, ordinary to him : " Meek-eyed votaress to filial piety ! " he exclaimed, shedding on his fair auditor the full blaze of his handsome eyes, " would that I knew thy pantronymic, that I might offer up incense, on the altar, I have built to thee in my soul. There would I sacrifice pure thoughts, and holy hopes, and loyal aspirations—unshaken faith, and star-like piety—the soft, and cherished charities of the hearth—friendship, and kindred trusts, and plumed patriotism, now waving high above the kingly crest, and, anon, the crowning ensign of the warrior's wreath ; all will I cast down at the feet of thy loveliness."

Shrinkingly, Veronica listened to the foregoing tirade ; she recognised, in the voice, and gestures of the speaker, a secret charm, that thrilled the mute chords of her sliding heart, and awakened many a forgotten memory. At every pause, she felt inclined to interpose, in order to impress the youthful rhapsodist, with a becoming deference, for the prescriptive majesty of her sex, but she found it difficult to adjust a suitable reproof, or arrange her ideas into the reserved, and formal phrase, she deemed appropriate. Not a little disconcerted, she moved towards Martinuzzi, whose silence, during his ward's complimentary effusion, had a different source. When, however, at last, the outpourings of Sigismund's spirit had fallen to a pause, and Veronica, to hide the blushes, which burnt upon her cheek, or, perhaps, her displeasure, turned away, Martinuzzi, with a faint smile, intimated to the young count, that his extempore declaration of attachment, however natural, was not quite in accordance with the ordinary forms of politesse.

" 'Tis not well done, my son," he said, " to start the innocent blush, from the pure heart, into the light of day. The fair sex are privileged. from all hasty approach, by the chevaux-de-frize of studied forms, and courtly ob-

servances — to overstep which limits, though you employ the choicest terms of adulation, were to penetrate the heart you aim at, like unto that fabled falchion, which froze, while it left a wound."

"It is hard," replied Sigismund, whilst his mien and gesture decidedly indicated insanity, and even the lines of his face, appeared to work, in correspondence with his words, that one can never be intent, on any little affair of the heart, but your eminence, with your solemn jargon, will whip one from the prospect. It was only last year, you denied me the company of that budding gilly-flower of the palace, whom the people, God forgive them for it ! nickname their queen. You must practise frowns in private on the maid, to awe her with, or you had hardly terrified her grace in the way you did, by smiling ; and, what's worse, I am not likely to encounter the lady's beauties again, before her coronation at Coloswar, whose advent is as near, to all appearance, as is her canonization, since both, alike, await your eminence's pleasure.

"It is my province," returned Martinuzzi, speaking with some little asperity of voice, and manner, (perhaps, from not exactly approving of the free, and caustic tone, adopted by his ward), "to have regard to the interests of the Lady Czerina, and the living daughter of John of Zapola shall not, while I hold authority, be made the footstool of any man's ambition."

"I applaud your determination, most absolute protector ; but who shall prohibit you yourself, from making her corpse your stair of empire," replied the other, with a bitter scornful laugh ; "besides, her beams, that, if they shine not on all alike, should, at least, be veiled, are too much pointed : there's an exception to your rule of state."

"Ha ! let me look on that man in Hungary," returned Martinuzzi, in a voice, both raised, and shaken, by his feelings, "bold enough to tamper, with my ordinance, in re-

spect to her grace, and the life-weary slave shall bitterly rue it!"

"In Hungary, my lord? — a-hem! but you have not to seek far," responded Sigismund. "The secretary to the Austrian ambassador, Marc Antoine Ferraro, is this slave."

Martinuzzi started.—"But see," continued the count, "where the Graf, Maximilian Pereny, lies him hitherward. I must show the coxcomb a fair pair of heels for't. I partly perceive, your nephew would fain wear my livery, but I'm as loath as your eminence, to part with my cap and bells, or yield a jot of my prerogative."

Martinuzzi made no reply; and, addressing Veronica, the count said, "Adieu! for the present, fair creature; I leave my late embosomed inmate to thy tender mercies: keep watch, and ward o'er it, for 'tis a mine may repay thy culture." Then, after a pause, turning to Martinuzzi, he spake forth, with stern, and marked emphasis, "Look to your nephew's courses, Lord High Cardinal! The towering eagle may stretch, and mount against the sun; his princely nature, nay, his heritage, bids him perch on clouds; but 'tis not so with birds of meaner pinion: should the sealed dove, with faint, unequal wing, dare tour, with upward speed, along the thin, and dizzy paths of light, let him reckon upon the falcon's check, nor cross his eminent track, and shun his beetling landmarks. Tell Maximilian Pereny so much, and,—but I crave pardon; your eminence must have enough on your conscience, without being burdened, by a fool's defiance, or made the go-between of a jester, and a popinjay." So saying, with a graceful obeisance to the cardinal, and a deeper to Veronica, who irresolutely returned the courtesy, the noble and interesting youth, stealing a long look at the maiden, which expressed a world of unutterable devotion, slowly backed out of the hall.

Martinuzzi gazed after him, with a countenance, in which doubt mingled with admiration. "Yes," thought

he, “it must be the dim midnight of his mind, and the labouring judgment eclipses, at the unsubstantial cozenage of his brain. I will make sure, however, and sound that Swartz to the core, and shortly.”

Martinuzzi was here recalled to the business of the moment, as his eyes turned in the direction, where Veronica awaited the signal of her dismissal. “My child,” he said, recovering from his momentary emotion, “I had forgotten—go now to your father; you have not long to stay with him. It will hinge upon his future fealty, the assurance of which, I have means he little dreams of, to arrive at, whether, for your sake, I pardon his past entanglements; but, if shapes of crowns continue to shake him, like comets, prompt him, my love, from the lord regent, that no earthly power can avert the consequence; so bid him break the involving net, and make his fate his minister, by self-control. Nay, nay, tremble not,” he added, with a kind, and encouraging accent; “bid your father cease, henceforth, to grasp at shadowy sceptres, and I doubt not, that the untoward concurrence of unhappy circumstances, which, for so long, hath overcast his fortunes, will shortly be dispersed, as the glowing influence of the new-born day dispels the illusions of the night.” With these words, Martinuzzi proceeded to summon an attendant, and, having placed the damsel under his conduct, dismissed her, with a parting benediction.

Veronica followed her conductor, with her eyes cast on the ground, and wrapped in painful meditation; but she had not gone many steps along the corridor, when her chaste ears were saluted, by a strange, affected voice, exclaiming—“By Venus’ doves! an armful of most rare delicacies! — the philtre of her lips were heavenly nectar! — Jove! but my uncle hath a taste — by'r lady! How fly her blushes out from Cupid’s armory! — Art married, sweetheart?” The affronted maiden, who had stopt short at first unconsciously, now drew herself up,

in order to pour out, in one concentrated glance of her bright eyes, the virtuous reproof, which swelled her bosom, and armed her cap-a-pe, with its crimson tide. The individual, who, at a short distance, stood eyeing her, with the utmost assurance, leant his elbow on the balustrade, with that free, and easy air of effrontery, which his vanity persuaded him was irresistible. He was a tall, raw-boned, strongly built, ill-featured dandy, the distinguishing expression of whose countenance was imbecility, with a strong cast of self-conceit. In matters of costume, he was manifestly an ultra, being apparelled in as finical, and flaunting a garb, as the fashion of the day admitted of. The tie of his scarf, and the nice adjustment of his doublet, were matters to admire. But, however the cut, and shape of his rich, passamented suit might exhibit proof of an exquisite fancy, and rare conceit, the little taste, or judgment shown in the adaptation of one colour to another, and the profuse embroidery, which overcharged, without exception, every article of vestment, not to mention the bad arrangement of the whole, stamped the character of the man, and served to determine, with how small a share of common sense, the vain attribute of lord of the creation, might consist. He appeared to have seen five-and-twenty summers.

Veronica raised her head, with the intention, as we have said, to awe down his presumption, with one piercing phillippic of her beautiful eyes ; but she found her object frustrated, by the abrupt departure of the unmannered coxcomb. Before she could again pass on, she discovered, that his sudden disappearance was occasioned, by the apparition of a man, enveloped in monkish habiliments. With his head declined upon his breast, and face, sunk within the cowl of his habit, this person glided along, like a spectre.

As soon as the usher of Veronica descried the fearful figure, he exhibited unequivocal symptoms of terror, ejaculating, in a whispering voice — “ Mary preserve

us ! — haste ! — Father Dominick !” Then, without adding a syllable of explanation, he set an example of that celerity, he recommended, and, darting forwards, his rapid walk very soon had all the character of a flight — so that Veronica was fain to exert her utmost speed, in order to keep pace with him. The man did not once slacken his steps, as he traversed sundry staircases, and corridors, until he reached an arched, and massive postern, which, heavy with iron-work, creaked harshly on its hinges. This was the entrance to the dungeons of the citadel, where we leave the maiden, for the present.

On Maximilian Pereny coming into the hall, shortly after Veronica’s departure, he did not, at first, notice the presence of his uncle, but looked obliquely behind him, apparently in apprehension of some one, following in his track. The authoritative voice of the regent, however, arrested his attention. “ Come hither, sir,” said the prelate, “ I have words to utter, whose type is in my heart, and has, ere now, cost me much anguish ; — attend to me.”

Pereny bared his brow of its beavered saki,* with waving estridge plume ; and, as Martinuzzi raised himself, on the rich regal seat, assumed a deferential attitude. At that moment, the same awful form, which, only the instant before, had scared Maximilian from the adjoining corridor, slowly glided, into the hall. Having measured, with inaudible tread, and with visage, inclined to the earth, the entire extent of the marbled flooring, the monk, in solemn silence, drew from his bosom a paper, which he delivered into the regent’s hands. Then, turning away, with the same echoless movement of the sandalled foot as before, the mysterious being made his exit, through a door, different from that, by which he had entered. At the awe-inspiring obtrusion of the unholy father, Maxi-

* A French military cap.

milian's heart trembled, with superstitious fears ; chill horror curdled in his veins, and relaxed his joints, as the cowled, and terrible ostent directed his stately motions towards him, and he experienced no inconsiderable relief, on his retiring.

As Martinuzzi's eye passed rapidly over the paper, just put into his hands by his confessor, he seemed to take in, at a glance, its purport, which stole the colour from his cheek, and lip. He suffered his head to droop upon his chest, and instantly became so utterly lost, as to forget, that any one was present. He may even have been unaware, that his thoughts framed speech, as, with a quivering lip, he murmured, looking at the paper, “ ‘To Luke Swartz,’ — So, — ‘ Now that Peter is slain, his followers flock to my standard by thousands — but Alaric Polgar is yet to be gained — you understand — to Hermanstadt ; I will follow.—*Iwan.*’ I will follow—*Iwan* ! Indeed ! we must make you welcome then, young gentleman ! How have my apprehensions sent a shadow, black as Erebus, which could never be, were they not substantive ! Yet how is this ? — *Iwan* in secret correspondence with Swartz ! with Swartz,—the man who—oh no ! there is no such falsehood. Earth could not abide the monster ; yea, every mute, engendered thing, beneath the all-enclosing firmament, would have an as-pick’s tongue, to hiss in his ear — Ingratitude ! Alike at staring noon and sable midnight, the uttering air would spread it about him, like a plague. My faith in Swartz built on a spider’s web ! Swartz, upon whose fidelity I relied, as upon the pillars of creation — I’ll not believe it.” Martinuzzi paused, strode through the hall, as one absorbed in thought, and then again commenced, half audibly, with himself. “ And yet this is more than suspicious ; it denotes previous conspiracy ; ’tis a shadow, cast, by by-gone days, and nights, and years of treachery, over the whole vista of glory, on which I reckoned. What a lone, marked, forlorn, wrung slave

am I ! Hemmed in on all sides, whilst my miseries haunt me, like blood-hounds ; yea, even on that point of retreat, whence first I started, they head me back. It cannot last — be still, — how then ? I must select, and spring upon the foremost foeman. What, ho ! who waits ?” An attendant appeared. “ Hie thee to the apartments of Viscount Rodna,” said the lord regent, “ and order the ingrate — I mean the keeper — to attend me, in my cabinet, and there await my coming.”

“ Swartz, your eminence ?” inquired the man.

“ Did I not say so, sir ?” said Martinuzzi, with unusual asperity. The attendant left the hall, and the regent, pressing his hands to his brow, exclaimed, “ What drops are these, have gathered on my forehead ?” Then, in a subdued, and melancholy tone, he went on —“ Yes, I strain, as doth the soaring eagle, entangled in the folds of the green serpent, that tires upon her heart; and feel, perhaps, like her.” The regent paused ; he covered his eyes with his hands, as if to shade some painful emotion. Presently, with a violent effort, recovering himself, he walked up and down the hall, for a few moments, and then turned suddenly towards his nephew, who stood an astonished witness of Martinuzzi’s discomposure.

“ What do you, sir,” asked the regent, abruptly, “ with that purple on your shoulder ?”

Maximilian coloured, and he hesitated to reply.

“ Will you please to attend, sir ! What do you with that purple ?” re-demanded Martinuzzi ; “ I desire an answer to my question.”

“ May it not displease your eminence,” replied Pereny, “ ’tis a scarf of sendal — a kind of — a most choice piece of raiment — truly of very felicitous cut, and of the newest fantasie.”

“ I spoke of the colour, sir,” said Martinuzzi, with severe emphasis.

“ Why, I cannot say much for the colour, if it dislike your eminence,” answered the other.

"It doth offend me, sir," returned the cardinal, whilst a shade of dark displeasure settled on his countenance. "In common with every honest man in Hermanstadt, it offends me, to behold the laurel round thy temples—to mark a mindless, inconsiderate dolt, strutting and swelling, like the frog in the fable. Everlasting shame! the blossom, which thou hast plucked, and wound, as 'twere a chaplet, within thy hair, shall never grow a fruit, nor glisten, but the day long, on thy forehead. That garment, too! Sir, it is a basilisk in my eyes. Nearer."

Maximilian approached the cardinal, who, unloosening the invidious emblem, from his nephew's shoulders, rent it asunder, and trampled the shreds under his feet. "There!" he exclaimed, with vehemence, "tear it to rags! Is this a time," the regent continued, "when the enemies of Hungary ride the country, with arrayed banners, to perk your folly, in the face of the land? Who put into thy mind a robe, like that? Wer't drunk, to assume it, and incense the wise, and valiant, who now throng this city, in the forlorn hope of averting the shipwreck of the state—wert drunk, I ask?"

"The forlorn hope, your eminence?" repeated Maximilian, in the tone of interrogatory, and with no small symptoms of astonishment.

"Such were my words, young man," answered Martinnuzzi; "and 'tis one of the signs of the times," he continued, "not the least portentous, that thy borrowed feathers have not, ere yet, been plucked, and thy reflected light extinguished. Did this devoted land, or your uncle's government, promise aught of durable, you may rest assured, that Hungary, however fallen, lacks neither heart, nor arm, sinew, nor will, to put a date to your pretensions. Whoso scattereth the seeds of hatred, and suspicion, in his path, must look to reap a bloody harvest."

"Nathless, my lord, I may outlive the wound, and, perhaps, the assassin," observed Maximilian; "and who

should be the stabbers, that should do the deed you threaten?" he added, with an assumption of hauteur, and in an affected, and arrogant voice.

"Patriots, sir," answered the cardinal, in a deep, stern voice; "and, however you may flatter yourself," he presently subjoined, "there are, in Hermanstadt, who merit that title, ay, many, who would plunge their daggers, through your slashed jerkin, did they see cause."

"I should be glad to look upon such," returned Maximilian, with emphasis; bearing himself, at the same time, in a manner, not altogether unbecoming his high lineage; "can your eminence instruct me how, and where, I may most probably fall in with the butchers, you boast of?"

"They abound, just now, about the palace, nephew, and in the vicinity of the court," answered Martinuzzi, evasively.

"Would you describe only one, my lord," said Maximilian, drawing himself up, into an attitude of defiance, "I would save him, from fulfilling your kind augury, if his doublet be passable to sword, or pistol. Name but one, your eminence."

"The lord regent of Hungary," replied the prelate, sternly, "did he believe you worthy of his wrath; but he knows you, sir, and you have leave to ruffle it, for him."

Maximilian bit his lips, and, fixing his eyes on the ground, was silent.

"Maximilian," resumed the cardinal, "tell me what fools, and blows you up, like bubbles, thus? Have I toiled, for years, to build myself a name, for you to pluck up the foundations? Understand, my lord, you have neither weight of character, nor competent talent, nor one distinguishing requisite, that I know of, to constitute you the fitting minister of any body of men, even in holyday times, leave alone, in such an angry, and disjointed era, as that, we are doomed to jostle in; you can put forth no merits of your own, none personal, or proper to yourself;

your solitary hope of making way with the Magyar Orság, must be derived from the name, you unworthily bear, but which, in fact, only recalls to men's minds, the great deeds of your ancestors, as witnesses of your degeneracy.* As it is, your influence will expire, when I abdicate my office, and that may occur sooner, than, possibly, you look for."

" You do not mean it, your eminence," exclaimed Maximilian; " you can never intend to quail your high honours, to the violent, and vindictive policy of Isabella. Oh! you will never condescend to hold your life, as tenant at will, from her. Have you not long had letters missive from his holiness, bearing the grant or donation of Transylvania, as an appanage of your rank? And will you forego such a splendid acquisition ?"

" And were I to accept the sceptre," replied the cardinal, " I have yet to discover, how the circumstance would operate to your advantage. I own to you, that, formerly, I indulged the hope, that the son of Peter Pereny, by an uniform, persevering course, in arts and arms, might have deserved well of his country, and even, perhaps, at one time or another, have found favour, in the sight of the Lady Czerina."

" My lord, such may yet be the case," said Maximilian.

" Never," replied the cardinal. " I repeat, there was a period, when I held such an opinion; but I must inform you, 'tis now many years since."

Maximilian would again have interposed, but the cardinal, without breaking off, with solemn earnestness proceeded; " You lay claim to an interest in my blood, Maximilian, and, from your earliest childhood, I have done all in my power to advantage your prospects, whether of this brief, phantasmal scene, or those, which centre in the

* "Les grandes actions de leur pères ne sont plus que des témoins que déposent contre eux."—MASSILLON.

brighter realities of eternity. For this, I require no thanks; I am accountable to Heaven for the trust, which your father left in my hands. Besides myself, Maximilian, you have scarcely a relative upon earth; certainly, not one, whose recognition would greatly delight, or credit you. I have been your only, but, hitherto, your powerful, and steady protector. I owe it to the memory of my sister, ever, whilst my name can serve you, to lend you all its lustre, to let you trim your feeble lamp, at the bright flame of my glory. Of three children, two brothers and a sister, your parent was, by far, the most estimable; but, alas! she soon sought the home of her nativity. The goodness of God, in still blessing my poor abilities, has since exalted me to my present distinguished rank in the state. Wherefore, think you, do I advert to these things? In order to put it to you, seriously, whether, in the absence of all intrinsic desert, you can trust to cabal, or party, to invest you with real, and lasting dignity? Why should you launch into the ocean of public life, without rudder or compass, and, above all, why alarm the national pride, by the impolitic and premature avowal of a design, which, it is my prayer to Heaven, that stubborn necessity may frustrate. Pereny, other Hungarians may have pointed out the Huniades and the Stradiote for their example; but, as your greatest glory is your father's name, so does the moral of his life furnish your best instruction.* It might warn you, that incompetent ambition is one of the most pitiable species of self-deception, bearing, in its very principle, the germs of its own exposure, and defeat. Let me advise you to moderate your desires, to the level of your mediocrity of talent. Panoply thee, with all my heart, Maximilian, in the warrior's garb; let thy body groan under iron harness, and

* “Aliis Decii reducesque Camilli
Monstrentur; tu disce patrem.” STATIUS.

teach your lance, in the vanward of the battle, to pioneer your way to greatness. Would you ascend the steep o^r fame, you will have to struggle into eminence ; to fight your way, step by step, and every inch of your ground you must contest, and, again and again, by cheerful submission to toil, and amid the laborious details of discipline, vindicate your right, to blend your name with your sire's, and country's. Purple your hands deep, in the blood of Austria, and your uncle will be the first, to applaud their ensanguined hue; but not your raiment, Maximilian, not your raiment ; and hereafter, thou wouldest do wisely, to place a shroud, before that solitary colour of a king, which sits on thee, like death."*

"Death, uncle!" echoed Maximilian.

"Death, sir, to which 'twill lead you," replied the regent ; "you have no title on earth, to arrogate to yourself the insignia of empire. Your father might not, in his proudest days ; how then should you?"

Maximilian's displeasure was pourtrayed on his countenance ; he, however, kept silence ; but shortly afterwards, as if the thought had suddenly struck him, he said, with an inquiring look, "You mentioned, even now, another brother of my mother—is he living?"

The cardinal knit his brows, but remained silent.

Maximilian felt his curiosity excited, and, after a pause, he ventured to repeat the inquiry : "If," said he, "I have an uncle, besides your eminence, in existence, what is he?"

"A villain!" answered Martinuzzi, in a voice of thunder. "A most consummate villain!" In uttering these words, a flush passed over his brow ; but, almost directly, he subjoined, in a milder tone, as if feeling ashamed, at having expressed himself, with such unwonted warmth—"One, Maximilian, who may yet—who may yet,

* Ἐλλαζε πορφύρεος θανατος.—HOMER, Il. v. 83.

by the grace of Heaven, live to repent his manifold iniquities. It is my daily prayer. Speak not of him."

To the mandate conveyed, in these last words, the curiosity of Pereny rendered him loath to submit; but he forbore to answer, and the regent, after casting his eye over the paper, he still held in his hand, said, "An affair of moment now calls me away; treasure up what I have spoken, and endeavour, for the future, 'so to order your conduct, as neither to abuse, nor waste the glory, left you by your ancestors.'* I tell thee, the sure, slow-wheeling hours, which time the evolution of ages, even now let loose the fate of Hungary, and her regent. Yet a little while, and both may subsist only in memory. Champ upon this bit, Maximilian, and act accordingly." In saying these words, the cardinal went forth, leaving his nephew standing, with vacant aspect, gazing, in the direction, which that personage had taken, and, apparently, hearkening to his receding footsteps, long after the sound could have possibly reached his ears. Then, rousing him-

* See the dialogue of Plato, entitled Menexenus.—Antiquity cannot furnish a more admirable piece of oratory than that (placed in the mouth of Aspasia the Milesian) from whence the sentence, quoted above, is dishonoured into English. It was repeated every year, on the anniversary of Marathon, and preferred, by the Athenians, to the orations composed on the same subject, by their greatest orators, Pericles, Lysias, Hyperides, and Demosthenes. Whatever Anaximenes may pretend, and Plutarch repeat after him, of their originating with Solon, this is the first occasion of funeral eulogiums occurring among the Greeks. With the Romans, the custom was already established. The oration ascribed to Pericles in the historian is, in all probability, a characteristic sketch of Thucydides, whose speeches, however appropriate, are not given with the accuracy of a Times reporter. That of Lysias we have not read. The other two have fallen a sacrifice to the edax vetustas, which Shirley calls, "the cruel teeth of Time." We the less scruple, putting the ideas of Plato, into the mouth of Martinuzzi, because the eloquence of the prelate, by a sort of *πειθαναγκη*,—an equal exertion of force and persuasion,—was commonly irresistible, and in his cradle (as was said of the Greek philosopher) a swarm of bees seemed to gather round his lips.

self, he settled his *saki*,* with its sweeping plume, to the becoming angle, on his forehead, and shaking the lofty feather, by the haughty movement of his head, sallied forth, somewhat precipitately, in quest of those, who might afford him their counsel, in this emergency.

The understanding of Maximilian Pereny, was of that ordinary calibre, which corresponded not ill with his personal appearance. He possessed considerable pride, but little dignity ; and, ascribing the continued favour of Martinuzzi entirely to his distinguished deserts, neither the invariable indulgence, nor the occasional correction, of his uncle, was capable of making any lasting impression, on such a temper. The repeated admonitions, and the gentleness, of the regent, alike failed to bridle the haughty, insolent, and overbearing spirit of the youth. The care taken for so many years, in appointing proper persons, to superintend his conduct, could not detach him, from the dissipation of amusement, or the allurements of the lowest sensuality. He was addicted to intemperance, and that to a degree, which exceeded the ordinary endurance of that age, and was far from consonant to contemporary habits. He would often indulge in the most shameless abandonment of passion, which gave umbrage to thinking men ; and the coarseness of his debaucheries, even the extreme license of youth might hardly serve to palliate. Thus, devoted to all the levities, and prone to many of the vices of his age, and country, that Maximilian should become the dupe of his own headlong propensities, and overweening vanity, was the natural sequence. The lord of a powerful domain, he felt himself called upon, to take a prominent part, in the affairs of Hungary, at that important crisis. He aspired to grasp the falling mantle of the prophet, and eagerly looked forward to the day, when his uncle would think fit, to slacken his hold on power,

* A French military cap.

and relinquish, into his hands, his delegated authority. But, to his chagrin, Martinuzzi did not appear, by any means, in a hurry, to cut out of the game; although, that he purposed, sooner or later, to retire into a private station, and substitute his nephew to the fatigues, and glory of office, was what his hopeful kinsman never suffered himself to doubt.

It is at all times difficult, and usually impossible, to conceive the actuating motives, if, indeed, there be any such, which influence a trifling, and irregular mind; the “true no meaning” of the poet cannot readily be compassed, and we find ourselves afloat, on a sea of conjecture, and all to no purpose. If it were not for this cause of hesitancy, we might, perhaps, and with some colour of reason, pronounce the ruling passion of Pereny, at this period, to have been ambition, although (as had been the case with his father) his hopes of success were so apparently founded on inordinate vanity, that never was the celebrated sentiment of the lyric poet, more applicable.* Still, if we may not form any satisfactory conjecture respecting the grounds of his confidence, we conclude, with great probability, that, viewing his merits, in the glass of self-love and flattery, Maximilian vainly imagined that, like another Atlas, his shoulders could sustain the poles of empire.

He, who knew not how to rule his own rebellious nature, was eager to make himself accountable to his country, and to posterity, for the happiness of millions. So reaching is the appetite of the human mind, however eunuch, and ungenerative its capacity! This high opinion of his personal merit, which the arrogant self-sufficiency of Maximilian entertained, was assiduously cultivated and encouraged by his immediate followers, who, seeing, in their imagination, the crown of St. Stephen glitter on the brow of their weak, and misguided patron, trusted,

* See Pindar; the 11th Nemean Ode, the 3rd Epode.

one day or other, to find their own account, in his advancement, and distinction. They readily entered into all his views, however absurd. Their oil-tongued sycophancy, ministered to every scheme, which his impetuous temper was naturally set upon, and they watched, and improved every occasion of insinuating themselves into his confidence, by accommodating their counsels to his inclinations, and rendering themselves necessary to the accomplishment of his wishes. It thus, unhappily for Maximilian Pereny, came to pass, that he could conceive no design, of however unprincipled, or even criminal a description, which would not immediately obtain furtherers and abettors, in those restless, and time-serving characters, whom his lavish expenditure, and perhaps his personal accomplishments, attached to him.

However, notwithstanding this general deference of his adherents, there might be found one, or two, exceptions, and his most intimate associate, the Graf Bathori, invariably consulted, what he deemed to be Maximilian's true interests, even when (as was often the case) they ran counter to his inclinations. He never concurred in any scheme, or recommended any proceeding, which he did not think would conduce to the reputation of Pereny. He hoped, doubtless, to ingratiate himself with his patron, by his zeal for his honour; and his advice might be equally interested, with that of the rest: but it was more judicious, and founded on what, he trusted, would promote Maximilian's real service, and be for his eventual benefit.

That person did not exactly relish the tone, and temper of his uncle's lecture; on whose departure, he repaired to the court-yard of the castle, where he fell in with Veronica, who had just quitted her father's prison, for the night. The gentle girl, who was too deeply absorbed, by her proper sorrows, to afford any heed to passing objects, was hurrying homewards, with her eyes fixed on the rugged *pavé*; and while thridding the steep, and narrow windings of the city, was so wholly engrossed with her

own thoughts, as to be unaware, that a young cavalier, splendidly attired, was close beside her; and had passed and repassed her, more than once, during the last five minutes, ever and anon staring broadly at her, and scrutinizing her beautiful face, and figure, with marked intensity of admiration. Accommodating his walk to hers, the coxcomb in question, advanced, or slackened his pace, according as hers was accelerated, or diminished. How much longer his mute, but somewhat exaggerated, demonstrations of regard, could have escaped the observation of their fair object, cannot be told, since they were shortly interrupted, by the abrupt exit of Veronica, from the scene. Pereny, who, only the instant before, had rudely gazed back, upon the pensive countenance of the unconscious maiden, on again directing his eyes towards their guide and cynosure, found, to his astonishment, she had “melted, as breath into the wind.”

There were now few passengers abroad, for the dusk of twilight was fast deepening into darkness, and the shadows of the projecting stories of the wooden buildings, fell gloomily down one side of the street. “Whither can the siren have vanished?” thought Maximilian, not a little nettled at her disappearance;—“into that house, to the right, I’ll be sworn, but I’ll unearth her, let her burrow ever so cunningly.” With this view, he would have incontinently passed the threshold of the cottage, when a gentle pressure on his shoulder, arrested his intention. He turned to face the person, who had thus taken him off his guard, whom he instantly recognized.

“Ha, Bathori!” he exclaimed; “by the word of a prince, you startled me; I have come abroad, on purpose to speak with you.”

“Your highness, then, on your way, seems to have undergone the influence of a cold, and potent spell,” returned the other; “for, on that ground, have you grown for the last five minutes, as if transfixed, by the wand of some fell enchanter.”

"Say an enchantress, and you will be nearer the mark.—By G—d! Bathori, I've seen an angel."

"From heaven, my lord?"

"No;—better by half, delicious flesh and blood! as lovely as Psyche, ere she wed,—as light, and full of grace; but not ether, man!—Not ether! at least I think so; although, while one might truss a point,* she was off; and, by my uncle's cap! she evanesced, in a very ethereal sort of fashion: like a flitting shadow, or a soft creation of beautiful breath. Bathori! Bathori!" he continued, laying his hand impressively, on the arm of the baron; "were it to cost me half my heritage, as sure as there are seven sacraments, I will possess this girl, ere her maidenhood be riper, by another sunset."

"Your highness, I apprehend, will have to double your bidding, and, perhaps, not, after all, attain your gratification," replied, the other.

"Ha! what mean you?" said Maximilian.

Bathori hesitated, in his endeavour to select such words, as might intimate his sentiments, yet save him from giving offence. "I wish, without hurting your feelings," he said, "I knew how to bring your highness, to a sense of what is expected of the man, who aspires to reign in Hungary."

"Speak out, in the fiend's name," answered Pereny, "only be brief."

"My words may sound harsh," continued Bathori, with great gravity; "but physicians affirm, the more nauseous the drug to the mouth, the more likely is there to be healing in it."

"Zounds! my lord," interrupted Maximilian, "I have swallowed, within this hour, as bitter a potion, as thy skill ever compounded."

* "One might truss a point," *i. e.* tie the strings that support the hose or breeches.

"I am sorry, it has not proved more efficacious," rejoined the other, with a smile: "prithee, who was your mediciner?"

"Even our sapient uncle," answered Maximilian.

"And the prescription?"

"To be on my good behaviour, at the peril of his favour."

"Did his eminence deliver himself in anger?"

"I never saw him excited to such a pitch of vehemence before," observed Maximilian; "and, what was worse, he tipped me a touch of the heroic, and tore my new purple manto,—that, you know, which was fashioned after a device of the dauphin's,—into so many fragments, that not all the milliners in Paris, could sew the shreds together."

"Oh, my lord!" said Bathori, with much earnestness, "your uncle, in his heart, has no contempt for such an emblem; but he deemed it false, and wrong, to stir the injured sense of Erdély, to fear and jealousy, by pouring painful beams into men's sight, which thou shouldst rather persuade to sleep, by thy humble bearing. Martinuzzi must have been much incensed."

"I am not sure of that," returned Maximilian; "but rather think, some state matters ruffled his temper. By heavens! he hinted, at abdicating his authority, and talked so darkly, about the mutability of human grandeur, and all that sort of thing, that, may I perish! if I know, what to augur from it."

"Why, that you will never reign in Erdély," said the baron, "if you wager, with wild rashness, your reversion, for the precarious smiles of woman." He paused, and then continued, in a lower, but more earnest tone, than before: "Again, my prince, beware of pleasure! The drained goblet is a charmed mirror, like to a crystal casement 'fore the heart, through which each eye may look, except the drinker;—and for the many glancing beams

of maidens' looks,—ah, your highness ! there may live several fair, like the Lady Czerina, but unto such, thou must be blinder than the Cyclop, if you would not have the world to roll away beneath thy feet. She who is queen, in no respect may brook a rival, *par amours*; and, if you give her one, my lord, 'tis at the imminent peril of that sacred crown, you will, otherwise, one day share."

" But her grace shall never learn," began Maximilian, when the other again took up the word.

" Ha ! your highness,—split not upon that rock ; princes, the copies of Divinity, aspire to many of his attributes ; amongst others they aim at omnipresence, and they often attain their object, more nearly, than men dream of. Never doubt me, my lord, but your motions are narrowly watched."

" By Czerina, surely ?"

" By her mother, your highness."

" Oh, d—n her mother !" exclaimed Maximilian, with considerable emphasis.

" With all my heart, my lord," responded his companion, in a lower key, and making a hasty sign to repress the other's vehemence ; " only curse within your compass ; do you not see, that a man, within this minute, has issued from yonder hut," and Bathori pointed to one, that stood a little apart from the general cluster : " if I mistake not, he yet lurks within the dark shadow of that thatched *piatza*."

" Thence, Bathori ? By my uncle's hat ! 'tis the very shed, through which, if I mistake not, my divinity disappeared, just as you joined me ! "

" Through that entrance, say you ?" demanded the Graf.

" Ay, under the sloping roof to the left," returned Maximilian.

" Then I can tell you all about your charmer."

"Thou, Bathori! Is the *kurva* a dickey-bird of thine?"

"Not so, my lord. But, if the maiden be, whom I suspect, she is, indeed, an incomparable creature;" and, in a whispering voice, the graf very briefly unfolded, to his attentive auditor, the particulars of the arrest of the overnight: "But ha!" he concluded, "I had forgot, beyond a question, that man has not emerged from the front of Hubert's cottage."

"Now, by the temper of my sword," exclaimed Maximilian, "be he who he may, I will speak to him."

"Nay, be advised, my prince, and let's pass on."

"Baron, in this I'll consider nothing, but my pleasure!" then, turning on the baron, with lighted eye, and boding brow, he cried; "Be so complying, as to loose thy hold on my ruffle; 'tis adjusted *point-de-vise*, and must not be deranged; give me way, or, by the Lord of heaven, it shall be worse for you!" and Maximilian laid hand on his sword's hilt.

"If your highness would but hearken," said the baron, releasing his hold, "only"—

The other, on finding himself free, sprung impetuously forward. The last faint words of Bathori, either never reached his ear, or failed in changing his purpose.

"Only," proceeded the baron, subduing the tones of his voice, and concluding the sentence differently, from what its commencement promised; "thou art the most incorrigible ass, that ever pretended to a crown! I have half a mind to leave thee to thy headlong impulses, and would, but that thy success is indispensable to my own mounting. My foot is yet on the lowest round of that ladder, which thou dost shape and plant, wherewith to scale the top of hilly empire; its base is thy rash, and ill-grounded ambition,—its capital, like the dream of the

patriarch, is lost in cloud and vapour. I cannot see so far, but, methinks, already the golden circle of empire clips my parched brow,—down! down! my swelling thoughts. Why, oh! why does my teeming heart bound and rebound, as if to burst its feeble tenement? Why, ever, at the twilight hour, do I thrill to sensations, intense, in proportion to the deep mystery of their source? Ambition is the heavenward vice of noble natures: by that fell Satan. Wherefore, then, should my bosom repudiate so wild, and divine a sin. Ha! but let me be sure of my footing, ere I trust myself on the slippery, and unsure tracks, I am about to tread.—Ambition! 'tis to venture on a sea of melting ice! all around crackles at her step: yawning and frequent crannies intervene. She dare not,—she must not retreat;—afar, is situate the perilous and undiscovered shore,—beneath, rolls the deep abyss of waters, lying in wait for its prey; yet, methinks,” he added, “with caution and courage for attendants, she may cross the gulf. The favourite of the Kiral!—* that sounds well, but,—ha! perchance *the word itself.*”

Bathori had suffered the current of his ardent reflections, to carry him thus far, beyond the confines of time and space, when his wild dreams were suddenly dispelled, by the sound of voices, high in argument, immediately succeeded, by the clashing of weapons, at no great distance. He hastened to the spot, whither Maximilian had preceded him, with the purpose of addressing the individual, whose form lay undistinguishable, in the deepening shades of evening. The broad shield of day had now, for some time, sunk down, behind a little ridge, or stony belt, which girded the fortification of Hermanstadt, to the west; and, although the horizon was illumined in her advent, the moon had not yet arisen, and the few eyes of heaven, overhead, twinkled faintly forth, as only half

* Kiral; King.

awake. Thus all objects, more especially, where shadowed, by the projecting fronts of the houses, were wrapped in obscurity, and doubt.

It was owing to this cause, that the baron had reached the lofty wall, already mentioned, without being made aware, till he came up, that the conflict had found a natural, and speedy close, in the discomfiture of one of the combatants. On his arrival at the spot, he perceived Maximilian Pereny, stretched upon the earth, bleeding, and senseless; his broken weapon lay at his side, but his conqueror, whoever he might be, had fled.

MANUSCRIPT VI.

“ Hic vir—hic est tibi quem promitti sæpius audis.”
VIRG.

ISABELLA, the Queen Regent of Hungary, was in the prime, and full blaze of womanhood, at the period when our present history dates its commencement. Whilst only a child, in respect to her knowledge of the usages of the world, at the command of her father, and not by the dictates of young affection, she had been joined in wedlock to John Sepusius of Zapola. Whatever sanguine hopes were entertained of this alliance, rested solely, on the frail, and crumbling basis of political expediency. Difficulties, however, shortly intervened, and the measure proved, in its consummation, and results, wearisome, and disastrous. John was considerably her senior in years, and was far from being possessed of that person, or of those features, most readily adapted to seduce, and rivet the affections, or command the respect, of woman. There was none of that voluptuous abandonment in his character, which the sex is prompt to love, nor of that felicitous daring, which they are wont to admire. The husband of the beautiful daughter of Sigismund, was just such a man, as is calculated to wear a girl's heart out, whilst the seat of life and passion throbbed, by night and by day, in the fruitless endeavour to make itself love, and be beloved.

Yet, it even was to him, that the warm, and noble Isabella plighted her faith at the altar, vowing to honour and obey one, whom she had met, for the first time in her life, only the day preceding, and respecting whose disposition, and claims on her affection, she could know little, or nothing. Ignorant of the world, and unacquainted with the capacity, and boundless sympathies of her own heart, its aptitude for the soft endearments of reciprocal attachment, she had fettered the pure, and virgin charities of her nature, ere she knew the value of the sacrifice. For awhile, the *child* remained unconscious of the extent, and character of her new obligations; but, alas! the *woman* could not be so blinded. As the excitation of novelty, and change ceased to operate, and her faculties expanded to a sense of the relative duties, which belonged to the married state, her passions and her understanding were reciprocally developed; the film cleared from her mental vision, and she awoke, from her sleep of apathy, to the stern reality of her position. The painted veil of life was rent asunder. The bright gilding, with which her inexperience had disguised the nature of her shackles, from her view, wore away, and the iron entered her soul. She, who was formed to be the solace, and delight, the companion, lover, friend, of some gentle being, as warm, and susceptible, as the embodied creations of her fervid fancy, had been immolated, at the altar of state necessity, and sacrificed to the selfish views of the feudal aristocracy of Hungary. She, who was surely meant, to anchor her earthly hopes, in the bosom of fond confiding love,—to be heart-bare to the man of her choice, and plighted troth, found herself abruptly translated, from the arms of her mother, to the frigid atmosphere of Buda, to be mated with one, contemporary with her sire, and who, if not quite so graceful, seemed to the dispirited, and disappointed princess, as polished, and as cold, as the unbreathing marble, wrought to rival the human form. As month, after month, rolled on, and Isabella became gradually

inured to her purposeless existence, she learnt, indeed, to wear her bonds with dignity, but not with patience. The spring-dew of her heart was dried up at its source. The sweet, and glowing aspirations of childhood visited her no more; the delicious freshness of her emotions no longer threw its magic, on the colouring of the minute, or lent an enchantment to the brilliant to-morrow of her destiny. She had tried that to-morrow, and proved its worthlessness. It brought to her no kindred bosom, on which to repose, and pour herself,—no fond, and speaking eye, with which, to interchange the glances of inexpressible affection,—no confiding ear, in which to unburthen the tale of her indurated feelings, and blighted hopes. In the whole universe she had none to spoil her; and what were this bleak world worth, she thought, deprived of the occasional visitation of love, and sympathy? In the eloquent words of Shelley—

“ To tread life’s dismaying wilderness,
Without one smile to cheer, one voice to bless,
Amid the snares and scoffs of human kind,
Is hard.”

Alas! the waywardness of the female heart! “ Despite her duty,” on the throne of her husband, Isabella yearned after the haunts, and dreams of her maidenhood. In her chaste married bed, she had to suppress the sigh, that struggled for utterance, and dry the scalding tear-drop on her eyelid, and, harder still, to blush, in the darkness of the night, at the commotion of her senses, of which a sigh, and a tear were not the sole interpreters.

It is not to be inferred, that the king regarded his charming wife, with any sentiments allied to aversion, or that he was insensible to the delicate endearments of conjugal society. This supposition is confuted, by the evidence of history. It is likely, he loved Isabella, as sincerely, as it was in his nature to affect any human being; but he was constitutionally frigid, and indifferent, and was, moreover, deficient in that particular, in default of which,

a man, however valuable his other qualities, seldom makes much impression, on the vacant tenderness of the female heart. He wanted soul,—sensibility,—that vital principle, which gives a zest to the soft communion of the sexes, without whose aid, gallantry is degraded to an idle, and unmeaning pastime, and the hackneyed routine of conjugal life, becomes flat and unfruitful, as the sea-sand. It was this deficiency in King John, that caused, in Isabella, that languishment of the spirit, that *besoin d'amour*, which stole over her, at intervals, even in the arms of her royal consort. She *inferred*, from the very depths of her aching sense, she was capable of loving, but did not love; she *felt*, she had been created to bless, and be blessed in requital; but “it was oh! in her heart,” that no blessing waited on her footsteps,—that no cherished thought of her’s found a responsive echo, in another’s remembrance,—that no approving eye beamed with more vivid satisfaction, at her approach, or became suffused with melancholy, in her absence. She was too great to court affection. Seated on her eirie aloft, she envied the linnet, who might freely nestle, and pair, at the foot of the precipice. She was solitary, unsolaced, joyless, unlinked—for what availed the joining of hands, if there ensued no intellectual connection,—no interchange of the heart? Alas! she felt, (and how truly!) that it was not home, without sympathy, without indulgence.

Just let loose, from the trammels, and fond cherishing of her childhood, she was like a bark, forced from shore, and cast, without steerage or compass, upon the wild of dreary waves, that swell the flood of time, with no haven in view, that she deemed worthy an effort; and incompetent, of herself, to weather each reef, and shoal, that momentarily object their peril, in the cheerless navigation of life. She had given her person to the monarch, but not her affections to the man; her heart would not blush into love, and joy, at her father’s bidding; she might not,—she could not bestow it, where she felt it was legally

due. But, alas! that heart—that site of her latent tenderness, and frailty—which even now panted for liberty, was not destined always to remain, the restless inmate of its mistress' bosom : the hour is at hand, when the dreamy vagueness of her wishes (“that craving void left aching at the breast,”) which hath troubled her so long, without assuming any defined, or palpable shape, will converge its whole strength, and concentrate all the deep mystery of its source, into one burning focus of desire, and passion. But the hidden springs of affection were, as yet, untouched ; and meanwhile, the mind of Isabella, required some relaxation, from those unavailing suggestions of the imagination, that sprung up within her, like weeds on a neglected tomb. She was not sorry to be awakened, from the delicious day-dreams, which besieged her on the throne, crept in upon her banquets, and violated the leisure of her solitude, without her having the power, or perhaps always the inclination, “to call back her self-control.” Yes, she would rouse herself, and shake off her, like “dew from the lion’s mane,” the voluptuous languor, which enervated her spirits, for want of the healthful stimulus, which reciprocal, and gratified love should have supplied. This disenchantment, she sought, by mingling in the rush, and hurry of political intrigue, and by endeavouring to take an interest, in the administration of affairs of state.

Herein she partially succeeded ; and none, in the predominating spirit of the Queen of Hungary, might discern the weakness of the woman, or penetrate the warm, and wanton feelings, that lay locked up within her.—“*Femina de sexu mollis, sed corde virili.*”* But in thus disengaging herself, from the entanglements of a too susceptible imagination, by calling into play, the powers of a vigorous understanding, Isabella grew callous, and unfeeling. The bitter consciousness of her own worn sensations, superinduced an indifference to the

* Character of Queen Isabella, in *Ruinæ Pannonicæ.*

misfortunes of her fellow-creatures. She owned a malignant pleasure, in wreaking upon others, the accumulated gall, which years of hackneyed splendour, and inward agony, had generated. She first welcomed the toils of ambition, in order to escape the meshes, with which her spirit had previously struggled; but, the exchange petrified, or erased every blessed, and gentler feeling, instead of meliorating her principles of action. Her sensibility, which could not subside into indifference, hardened into the *θηριον* * of despotism.

The open and amiable girl, of a few years since, became gradually transformed, by the force of circumstances, and by the strong, though invisible influence of habit, into a violent, and inexorable being,—haughty in command, inflexible to entreaty, and impenetrable in her counsels. The fire of her ardent ungovernable temperament, flamed out in acts of authority, which bore down all opposition. Yet, was Isabella gifted by nature, with talents for command, of the very first order. Resolved and uncompromising, if she owned little of the cool sagacity, and comprehensive views, proper to the statesman; she was assuredly possessed of a certain impracticability, that knew not how to succumb,—a decision, that admitted of no temporising, or delay,—a tact, in anticipating what were the projects of her opponents,—and an admirable wit, in devising the readiest mode to circumvent them.

The impolitic division of the executive authority, in consequence of the last testament of John, became, as might have been predicted, the source of disunion between the parties.—“Two suns keep not their motion in the same sphere.” The jealousy of the supreme power, was inflamed by the inevitable distinction of sex, and the diversity, if not the opposition, of their characters; so that their rivalship was exasperated, not only by mutual

* Aristot. ap Julian. p. 261.

injuries, but, what was harder to be borne, by reciprocal contempt. The cardinal despised Isabella, as a vain, and opinionative woman, and was, in his turn, disdained by his fair colleague, as a low-born, and hypocritical priest.—*Deux glaives ne peuvent être renfermés dans la même fourreau.*—However, in the hour of difficulty, and danger, Martinuzzi, gradually became lord of the ascendant.

——— Suffragia quippe peregit
Judex vera timor. Victus ratione salutis,
Ambitus, et pulsus tacuit formidine livor.*

But, alas ! the temporary nature of Martinuzzi's power; the obligations, which it entailed upon him, were overlooked, in a bequest of such magnitude; and the slight tenure, by which he, at first, held his synarchy, was imperceptibly consolidated, into the abstract right, sequent upon long established possession. It may, however, silence the detractors, from the fame of Martinuzzi, would they bear in mind, that the fabric of the state was shattered, and disjointed; and that it required the strong, and skilful hand of a master, to hold together the bonds of national unity, and concord.

But Isabella never forgave the injuries she was obliged patiently to endure, at the hands of her colleague; and her resentment, perhaps, became the more rancorous, and inveterate, in proportion as experience taught her the necessity of temporising.—“*Manet alta mente reposta injuria.*”†—Perhaps, the enjoyment of present competence, is incompatible with the remembrance of past splendour. Be that as it may; regal honours, a stately palace, a numerous retinue, all, that, Martinuzzi hoped, might alleviate the chagrin of Isabella, served to exasperate, rather than appease, her secret sentiments of enmity. The restlessness of her ambition was thinly immasked, by a tender concern for the succession, and by the

* Claudian.

† Virgil.

specious pretence, which the natural anxiety of maternal fondness readily afforded, so that it was not, until after a long, and protracted struggle, that the lord regent wrenched the truncheon, from the fist of his royal colleague, and came to rule by his sole, and undisputed will. In fine, however, the defeat of her general, Valentinian Turascus, left her nothing, but the *inane nomen*,* of her high office, whilst the master-mind of Martinuzzi, soon after, centered in himself the entire authority, attached to the title. He assumed the right of exercising, without appeal, the whole legislative, as well as the executive functions; he usurped, from Isabella, the privilege of coining money,† and imposing taxes,—his was, moreover, the jurisdiction of life and death, of foreign alliance, and domestic economy.

Still, even after the uncontrolled, and independent sovereignty of the state was extorted, by the grasping talents of the cardinal, and the natural, and resistless claims of merit, and of violence, had superseded the accidental, and ideal prerogative of birth, Isabella contrived, by gathering around her in opposition, many of the native, and turbulent nobility, to thwart the views, and vex the councils of the cardinal; and, by this means, to set bounds to the fulness of his power.

It thus unfortunately happened, that to all the other calamities, under which the country laboured, were joined the gall, and bitterness of court intrigues, and civil dissension. Yet, as respected the silent collision, (“*discordiae tacitæ*”) of the regents, the less that real cordiality prevailed, the more were the exterior demonstrations of amity exhibited. On such occasions, the conventional decorums of high rank, are seldom violated, nor were the formal offices of friendship, suffered to fall

* Boethius.

† On the coinage of Isabella, was this inscription:—Si Deus nobiscum, quis contra nos?

into desuetude, in the instance, under review. Whatever might be their mutual consciousness, both Isabella, and Martinuzzi, took care to cover their feelings towards each other, with the polished surface of reciprocal respect. Nevertheless, from the smiling ostentation of their courtesy, its rankling rottenness came to be understood, although, it was not permitted to be revealed.* The clashing of interests, and the divisions, and subdivisions of faction, superinduced upon the supposed rivalship of the two supreme rulers of Hungary, it were at once needless, and tedious to dilate upon. They belong to a loftier avocation than ours, and have no direct bearing upon the present tale.

We may content ourselves briefly to notice, that, in spite of the providence of Martinuzzi, the distraction of the times paralysed the arm of government. It should seem, that conspiracy, and rebellion stalked abroad, like a giant at noon-day, naked and unchallenged. Either by the solitary ruffian, or by bands of lawless depredators, the whole country was spoiled, and laid waste. Those aggressions on the public tranquillity, which, considering the tumultuous disposition, familiar to the nation, might have been little regarded, seemed to become more serious, by being viewed, in connexion with the ill-compacted frame of government, consequent on the rivalship of the regents. In this state of affairs, the bonds of civil life were burst asunder, whilst those fierce haggards, the malignant passions, let loose upon society, were hallooed on to their quarry, and, under pretence of vindicating the cause of freedom, rapine, defloration, and murder, became the animating spirits of the scene. The household charities were invaded,—the wholesome ties of kindred were loosened and snapped,—the ordinary intercourses of humanity were interrupted, no one knowing in whom to confide,—the days of vassalage were gone,—

* *Discordiæ tacitæ et quæ intelligerentur potiusquam viderentur.*

the hereditary serf found himself enfranchised, without an effort, and betrayed his lord to the vengeance of the invader,— “*Corrupti dominos servi,*”* and, (a circumstance, by the way, which tends to illustrate, still more strongly, the factious spirit, and feverish excitement of the public mind, incident to a minority. A clamour was darkly propagated, which spared not even the regent. The rumour went, that persons had been subjected to the loss of liberty, and possibly of life, respecting whose practices, whether treasonable or innocent, the lord cardinal could only have obtained cognizance, through those emissaries, and spies, whom he scrupled not to introduce, in the guise of ecclesiastics, into the different monasteries, throughout Transylvania. But Martinuzzi, by his zeal and piety, had acquired the character of being a main pillar of the Catholic church, and it is not easy to conceive, that he would forfeit that high distinction, by permitting, for any secular ends, the sacred seal of confession, to be violated. It was evident, however, that he gained intelligence of all that passed in the principality, with an apparent prescience, that was inexplicable; but, whether it was merely a superior system of espionage, which gifted him with his colossal foreknowledge, is a question which cannot now be satisfactorily answered, since history affords us no clue, to unravel the mystery. At the time, however, the public apprehensions were fortified, by the strong suspicion, which the malignity of men’s tongues failed not to bruit abroad — that the confessor of Martinuzzi, like a subservient fiend, had compelled the powers of evil to work the will of himself, and his eminence, to the utter discomfiture of their common enemies. It would seem, however, incumbent on the historian, at this time of day, to presume the innocence of Martinuzzi, in regard to such a charge: the nice and secret springs of

* Tacitus.

action, which impelled a high dignitary of the church, and one, too, who, otherwise, was looked upon as an amiable, and pious man, to retain so questionable a character as Father Dominick, in so intimate a relation, about his person, were involved in a cloud of suspicion, and, since they might not be investigated, were peculiarly obnoxious to the whispers of malevolence.*

In the meanwhile, the death-stroke of several magnats, and independent chiefs, was accelerated by the axe of the executioner, because, as was said, “ their virtues were incompatible with the rule of Martinuzzi.” †—“ The Corinthian columns of society,” were either crumbled by the bolt, or scared by the flashes, of arbitrary power; and the dungeons of the regent were crowded with individuals, implicated in the late lawless transactions.

It was one morning, during the time of terror, and distrust, which we have commemorated in our last pages, that a cavalier, of mature years, clad in the knightly vestments of the time, stood, for a brief space, before a door of a small lodge, or turret, which flanked a stone wall of great height, and considerable extent. He was accompanied, or, perhaps, it were nearer the truth, to say, attended, by a person, whose towering form, and somewhat incongruous costume, doubtfully intimated the lawless Olah, or roving chief of Wallachia. The postern was opened, on a tap from the cavalier, and, having passed within, the two found themselves in a sort of park, or garden, seemingly private, beautifully arranged by art, and more beautifully broken by nature.

* The philosophic observation of Tacitus, on a similar occasion, was happily applied by a satirist of the day, to Martinuzzi and his confessor.
“ Sed, quia P. Dominicus facinorum, omnium repertor habebatur, ex nimia caritate in eum, Martinusii, et ceterorum in utrumque odio, quamvis fabulosa et immania credebantur.”

† “Quem Caligula occidit, quod melior vir esset quam esse quemquam tyranno expediret.” Seneca, De Beneficiis.

It was refreshed by fountains, and by the silver windings of the river Zibin. The grounds shot down upon the translucent waters, where they widened themselves into an extensive basin. This was skirted, by some gigantic trees, which, however few, sufficed to over-canopy a small, clear fountain, that threw up a crystal column, to the height of many feet, from a large jet, in the midst.

As the cavaliers walked leisurely on, in the direction of the river, the elder, and apparently the more important of the twain, addressed his companion, in words to the following effect :—

“The purpose, of which we have lately spoke, must now be opened to a person, whose interest is most deeply involved in our success. Let me, however, understand : thou remainest confident in thy opinion, that if the opportunity were afforded thee, by the permissive negligence of his followers, and officers, in the day of battle, thou couldst, with the aid of some of thy stout warhawks, by one bold swoop, bear off the person of this man, in the hour of his triumph, whither, matters not, provided that the magnats of Hungary, and Transylvania, be never more overborne, by his tyranny.”

“I will pledge myself, as deeply as thou pleasest to that point,” replied the other chieftain ; “and for this substantial reason, as I told you before, that, previously to your having instructed me in your wishes herein, and applied for my aid, to carry them into effect, it was my intention to adopt, from motives proper to myself, something like the line of proceeding, your policy would chalk out for me. But, my Lord Balassi, I must make free to inquire, who is this third party, you speak of ? Were our enterprise, or rather mine,—for I shall be the active instrument,—a mere undertaking for your single benefit, you might initiate all the world into the secret, for aught that I should demur ; but, since 'tis an affair, in which I consider myself the party, I do not say, most endangered, for I know not the meaning of the word, but most in-

tered ; I do not choose to have the success of my sanguine hopes, which soar on steady wing, beyond the utmost stretch of thy imagination, risked by any rash confidence of thine. Tell me, then, at once, who is this person ? or I go back as I came, and you may forget, we ever discussed the subject.”

“ Content thee, friend,” replied Balassi, “ she is one, who, whatever benefits may accrue to thee, and thy people, by the holding this man in bondage, will find herself a hundred-fold more advantaged. ‘ Tis true, there is a reward, e’en now, advertised for thy head, which will be taken off,—not thy head, man, but its price—so thou needest not gloom so terribly ; but the personage to whom I allude, is concerned herein, more than the paltry preservation of life, and infinitely more than is comprehended in the mere gratification of a whole race of Egyptian pilgrims. Every minute of her existence is held in a state of thraldom, and one pang of her heart, in this regard, outweighs incalculably, the pains of a whole life of ordinary mortals. But why should I discourse to thee of such high matter, which exceedeth thy understanding ?”

“ Why should you, indeed, my lord ? I am not a man to agitate my wits, with what is not directly conducive to my proper good : ‘ Ne sutor ultra crepidam,’ hath ever been my rule.”

“ Well, friend,” said Balassi, “ your Cygani, or Wallachian Patois, which ever it be, is not now the thing needed ; the lady, to whom I shall presently introduce you —”

“ A lady, forsooth ! ” interrupted the other ; “ a most rare depositary for a secret ! But since it happens, I can give a guess, who *is* that lady.” And he cast around a cursory, but significant look, on the highly-decorated grounds, they were slowly measuring. “ I will not start any objection on that score.”

“ Twere as well you do not,” replied Balassi, haugh-

tily ; “ but to return to what we were saying. Have you these determined set of heroes, you boasted of erewhiles, planted on the spot, ready to act ? ”

“ Unquestionably, have I ,” answered the other. “ They crouch, as little dreamt of, near Coloswar, as any troop of wolves, under their coverlet of snow, what time their scent is up, and appetite keen, and the sun goes down on the human spoil, with which Carnage hath sated his brother Death, and they rouse them, from their long slumber, to discuss their prepared quarry.”

“ Yes,” said Balassi, musing ; “ Coloswar is likely to be the point of attack, and, if I err not, the neighbourhood of that city must become the arena of a bloody struggle, one of these days. Towards the gates, the imperial force directs its march, doubtless allured by the regalia of Hungary, which is deposited within the fortress, and there will Martinuzzi be compelled to contest that sovereignty, which he would not voluntarily forego ; nor would I, God be my witness ! willingly see the crown of St. Stephen light on the head of Ferdinand.”

“ You may take my warrant for it, my lord, it never shall,” said the other, with a peculiar expression, which, being remarked by Balassi, afterwards occurred to him as singular, although, at the moment, it made small impression on him.

“ The genius of Martinuzzi is my best surety,” said the count, after a short pause, “ that such a fatal stab to the independence of fair Erdely will be warded off in time. Prior to the utter defeat of the invader, you will not be required to act : understand, sir, not against Battista Castaldo, Marquis of Piadena, will you waste your strength ; but, on the overthrow of that general, you will spread your snares around the victor, George, cardinal, and regent of Hungary.”

“ Be assured, at all events, I will not drain my resources,” said the other ; “ my object is, first, the discomfiture of the Austrians ; and then, by shackling the

usurper, to clear the way for the universal acknowledgment of the rightful queen of Hungary."

"Nay, friend," observed Balassi; "I should rather suppose, your inducements to this business lie elsewhere; certain privileges to be conceded to thy people, for instance."

"It may be so," said the other, in a tone of indifference, "or, if not, we need not now confer about terms. You have your motives; I have mine; which are soundest, time will discover; and so that our common point be gained, it does not much matter, either way. But, my lord, though the moments of both of us may amount, in the end, to the same sum of time, my cares are more multitudinous than yours, and I cannot afford to lavish the precious fugitives, with the like thoughtlessness. My every minute is tasked to the uttermost. I have attended you so far, at your request. 'Tis treason to ourselves, since the lady, you spoke of, is not visible, to dally longer. Even were she present, I know of no inspiring argument, which she could use, in favour of this adventure, one half so powerful, as I have already whispered to my secret soul."

"Why, surely," said Balassi, "it would pleasure thee to know, from authority, that thou wert engaged in a loyal deed, were it only, as a set-off to certain transactions of a clear contrary description."

"The thought I meditate," said the other, "I care not what men call; they can't, I trust, but have to say, it succeeded, and success is every thing."

"Then this gallant gentleman is most confident in his ability, and means, to achieve this mighty enterprise," said a soft, and strange voice, close at hand; and the same minute, a female, splendidly arrayed, stepped forth, over the threshold of a low, rustic summer-house, near which they stood, and gracefully saluted Count Balassi. Both cavaliers uncovered their heads; the one, of his light calpac, and Balassi, of his open helmet, or morion; for

they had no difficulty, in immediately recognising Queen Isabella.

The same causes, which had insensibly inclined the disposition of the lady, from its original bent, had gradually left their proper traces, on her countenance. Still, what had once been the peculiar cast of her mind, might be gathered, from an attentive perusal of her features: for the physiognomy of qualities, which are indigenous (so to speak) to the individual, can never be entirely suppressed, however the discipline of time, and habit, may insensibly disguise, or partially obscure, its primary expression. Her stature was of a height, which rose to the majestic, and corresponded with her station, and royal habitudes. She looked “every inch a queen.” Dignity, and command sat enthroned on her front, as on a pedestal; her dark hazel eyes, overarched by the gracefully-pencilled eyebrows, whilst they flashed with disdain, exultation, or reproof, confessed her born for empire; but, ah! in solitude, or when indeed she learned to love, “her life seemed melting through those looks,” and the thirsty air might quaff whole draughts of liquid light, instinct with all the soft, and luxuriant sensibility of her temperament, and sparkling, like so many drops of soul, with the passion, which consumed her. Indeed, the dark hollows, round about those orbs, seemed, to use the figure of the poet, the very mark for Cupid’s archery,* Her profuse, and glossy ringlets rivalled, in darkness, the raven’s plume; the form of her head was simple, and dignified, and the lines of her ample forehead, denoted her inflexibility of purpose. The outline of her face presented an oval, whose noble regularity, viewed in profile, might once have interested, from its romantic, and melancholy character; but, if so, the hand of time had nearly effaced that expression, and chiselled, in its place, the contour of

* Κοῖλαι βλεφάρων ἰοτυπεις βάσιες.—RUFINUS.

regality, and pride. Her mouth was beautiful, and feminine, although the ripeness of the upper lip, slightly swollen, as if newly stung, (perhaps an outward, and visible indication, of what had been her abstract, sensual propensities, in her inexperienced girlhood), had settled into the habitual curl of haughtiness, and disdain. Within, gleamed two rows of polished ivory. The swan might have been proud to display so stately, and graceful a neck, as uprose, in just, and admirable undulation, from the firm, and developed bust, and broad, dazzling shoulders of Isabella.

Such was the queen of Hungary, when we introduce her to our readers, and to the Graf Balassi. The count, to whom she had addressed herself, was the first to speak.

"I have waited upon you, madam, at this hour, according to your wishes, expressed at our last interview, and have thought it advisable, that you should yourself converse with the famous leader, whom I named to you, and whose arm is destined to rid your highness, and the country of that domineering priest, you wot of. I have, therefore, your grace, brought him hither with me, and this person, standing before you, is the man."

"Now, as ever, you have acted rightly, my lord Balassi," said Isabella; "and you have my thanks. I need not inquire, friend," she continued, shooting a glance at Balassi's companion, by a turn of the eye, without, however, altering her position, "respecting your appetency for the glorious work, in which we would wish to employ thy energies, for I have heard much of what thou hast just spoken; I will ask, rather, that, which is more becoming of our station, and agreeable to our disposition to ascertain, namely, in what way we can best recompense, so enterprising a coadjutor?"

The person, thus addressed, stood with head erect, and a firm countenance. "Madam," he replied, "I mean no disrespect, when I assure you, that it were to tax your bounty, infinitely beyond the means of your exchequer,

were I to name a recompence—one half so mighty, as I propose to myself, in achieving this adventure; and that, without any reference to your grace's largesses. I seek nought of you, but your influence with your nobles, to afford me that opportunity, I thirst for, quite as much as can your highness, and, perhaps, with greater reason."

Isabella was probably mortified, to think, that the utmost extent of her proffered liberality should be rejected, in such unqualified terms ; it was, therefore, with a considerable degree of hauteur, that, after scrutinizing, for a moment, his daring cast of countenance, she demanded of the count, whether his companion was not connected with the people, called Cyganis ?

"I am their leader, madam," said the person in question, stopping the reply, that was on the lip of Balassi.

"And your name, sir; or title, if you have any?"

"I am count, by virtue of my office," answered the other; "and, in the world, commonly go by the style of Count Ragotzy, for it is convenient, sometimes," he continued, with a meaning smile, "to sink the name, Alaric Polgar, which is properly mine, by birth and parentage. Such, hitherto, have been my distinctive appellations : what they may become hereafter, depends very much, on the issue of that event, which shall shortly fill the ears of Hungary, but which is yet, in the womb of time."

"How, say'st thou?" said Isabella, and her look seemed to rest, with scorn, on the Cygani; "dost seek to exalt thee, by adding to thy titles? Thou would'st have had me believe, I ween, not a minute gone by, I had no boon, ample enough, to requite a brave officer like thee. What rank,—what new appellation,—what distinction, dost thou covet? Only state thy wish, that, with a word, I might transmute thy hope to certainty, or at least, to what is little less than such, being contingent, on the success of thy daring, in this emprise."

"Why, 'faith, madam," said Ragotzy, "I have only to repeat, I am not moved to the matter, by any hope of

your highness's patronage, or favour. I am here, acting from my own impulses : when you see, how far my course correspondeth with your highness's views, it will be then time enough, to talk of rewards and honours; but ere I humbly take my leave," he continued, disregardful of the angry spot, that loured on the imperial brow of Isabella,—“I would request this lord,” turning to Balassi, “to inform me, who are committed with him, in this conspiracy, and, by what token, I am to distinguish his confederates, so that I might make some distinction, between friends and foes, in the onslaught, which is likely to ensue; for I apprehend, that Martinuzzi will sell his liberty, and certain of his body-guard their lives, pretty dearly.”

“Why, I believe,” replied Balassi; “you must, e'en, in a great measure, trust to your sagacity, on the instant. The conduct of any particular chief, under the circumstances, will be the best badge. Any other, were dangerous; nay, it were obviously impossible, in certain instances, to adopt any common and distinguishing mark, and it were only to lead you into error, to assume such, partially. The lords, Maylat, Nadastis, and such as they, need hoist no colours to exhibit their hostility to Martinuzzi. Their deeds will manifest their party. Others, like Count Turascus, and old John Banffy, though we dare not lay open our conspiracy to them, have, we know, their hands on their swords' hilt, and the war-cry, “*Czerina*” on their lip; and, trust me, the word will be pronounced, and a blow struck at the same moment, that they think they discover, the slightest waning of the star of Martinuzzi. Then will they bring to our aid, all the force of their vassals, and, what is of more importance, all the authority of their character. But you will be initiated, particularly herein, by Mircé, whom you will see at Coloswar, and unto whom your grace, if I understood right,” he added, addressing the queen, “meant to transmit certain missives.”

“ You will oblige me, sir, by undertaking their charge,” said Isabella, in a grave tone of voice, and with a manner, even more formal, than she had hitherto adopted. Then, addressing herself to Balassi, she said, in a freer voice, while her countenance shone, with a smile of anticipated revenge :

“ It happens, most fortunately for our views, my lord, my having gained my point, with the cardinal, in regard to that truly attached, and faithful follower of mine, being appointed to the office of castellan, in Coloswar. Previous to the strange evanishment of Count Oldimar, both the governors were the cardinal’s creatures : now, thank Heavens ! in Mircé, I command a most devoted adherent, on the very spot, where his services promise to be invaluable. Then, again,” speaking to Ragotzy, who had turned his head aside, during these last words, she said,— “ You are too little used to the decorums of a court, sir count, to hide your feelings : I, however, pardon your impatience, and will not detain you an instant, after consigning these trifling despatches to your especial care. Deliver them into Mircé’s hands ; they contain directions for his conduct, and information, which he, and all my friends, may find of use ; moreover, I have not forgotten to commend the interests of the bearer to his excellency.” She paused, and the haughty curl of her lip seemed to increase, as she added ; “ adieu, sir count, till we meet again ; when, please God ! and your sword be true, we shall be in a position, to treat with you, as becomes a crowned queen.—My Lord Balassi, I look to see you once more, ere you leave Hermanstadt for your patrimonial hermitage. Gentlemen, both, your obedient !”—And Isabella, after acknowledging the reverence of the chieftains, with graceful, though somewhat haughty courtesy, turned in another direction, and followed one of the intersecting walks, which appeared to lead to a remote quarter of the gardens.

“ Now, that yonder lady be at length gone,” said Ra-

gotzy, “ I shall be glad to hear, my Lord Balassi, your reasons, for mixing her greatness up, with the matter in hand. Were I less urged on by private motives, than I am, her carriage is not exactly calculated, to give one a zest for the undertaking.”

“ To say truth, friend,” answered Balassi, “ I myself, as to individual taste, entertain no uncommon good-will, for that haughty dowager. I ever held John of Zapola, since he joined in wedlock with her grace, no friend to the rights, and privileges of the nobility; and I, and Maylat, (the man I mean, who is now held a prisoner by Solyman, the father of the young nobleman, who is joined with us, in the present enterprise), and certain other indignant spirits, were, in fact, up in arms, on divers points of difference, when King John gave up the ghost, but that grudge is long over; and verily, after all, what were the fasces of the late king’s authority, in comparison, with the rods of iron, with which the usurping regent scourges the native aristocracy? Isabella is confederated, at this day, with the magnats of Hungary, simply because common injuries have wrought out old causes of mutual distrust. I make no doubt, she anticipates ruling over the country, as perfectly in contempt of us, the people,* as ever she was used to do, by means of her ascendancy, over her doating husband. She may find herself mistaken. The principal magnates dread her imperious temper, and in any event, will hardly enlarge her authority. They will ascertain their true interest, no less than perform a paramount duty, in supporting the Lady Czerina, in all her just prerogatives, on the throne of her father. She is a mere child, and might be easily moulded to our will; whilst her mother, as innately a tyrant as Martinuzzi himself, would be as little inclined, as is that stern prelate, to pay court to the nobility. But at present,

* The people, *i. e.* the privileged classes.—Nomine autem populi hoc in loco intellige solummodo dominos, prælatas, baronas, et alios magnates atque quoslibet nobiles.—Opus. Trip. part 3. tit. 4.

from our connexion with the widow of King John, we derive a considerable accession of influence, and reputation; and as neither party commit themselves, by throwing a light on their future intentions, the removal of Martinuzzi, will leave the path open on all sides."

Ragotzy paused for a moment, and then replied; "I will deal plainly with you, my Lord Balassi," he said: "the other night, long after the deep mid-hour had tolled, I chanced to be in a retired aisle of the church of St. Theresa. Whether the enacting, or the confession of a deed of sin, recommended so remarkable a sojourn, matters not. Let it suffice, that, then, and there, I heard with my own ears, yon lady, so proud in seeming, pour forth, in no measured terms, her passionate love, for a youthful cavalier, whom she joined, in the church, most probably by assignation. That paramour," continued Ragotzy, having observed, after a pause, that Balassi was silent from astonishment,—"for the words of Isabella implied his being no less to her—that paramour was Antoine Ferraro, the secretary to the Austrian legation, in this city."

Balassi started, and showed no small symptoms of surprise. "Just Heavens! is it credible?" he exclaimed.

"Hardly so," replied Ragotzy; "but, nevertheless, most veritable."*

"Did he court her?"

"Rather, she courted him, plead, sued to him."

"How?—affectionately?"

"No; servilely,—I may say, basely."

"What! that scornful dame?"

"Scornful, my lord!—Pish, pish! Methinks, at your years, you should better understand woman's nature. Pent-fires!—But we are from the point. After what I

* The interview between Isabella and Ferraro, will be found detailed in a future chapter, when the reader will learn how Count Ragotzy happened to overhear all that passed.

witnessed, I am right in considering her highness, no very safe accession to our confederacy."

"Antoine Ferraro!" ejaculated Balassi.

"Even he," replied Ragotzy; "and, holding the office he does, he is the very man, whose cognizance of our plot, we have most cause to deprecate."

"Isabella!—she, whose pride was glorious,—to stoop to such an abject lowness, as to sue a lover! To fall so far beneath her proper self!—But, enough,—she will never, surely, reveal to the Austrian, our scheme to free the country from Martinuzzi's domination." Thus Balassi pondered with himself, musing audibly.

"Possibly not," answered Ragotzy: "but the integrity of the head, where love's frailty riots in the heart, is not worth much. A seductive word will get at secrets sooner than the torture. However, if danger there be, 'tis already incurred, and for myself, my plans are hardly so bound up in yours, as to make it a circumstance worthy any regard; or else, by the God in heaven! the minion's intrigue with Isabella, should prove his last offering to the devil, whether *par amours*, or otherwise."

"Well," said Balassi, we must only hope for the best; 'tis singular, however, the choice her highness has made. I have heard it whispered, that this young secretary has been selected, by Martinuzzi, for the bridegroom of the Lady Czerina."

"Surely you err," said Ragotzy; "the rumour ran, the regent's nephew was to be turned into a king, by the conjuration of this royal maiden's bed."

"Why, in truth, such a match were not so bad. The son of my ancient friend, Pereny, would scarcely seem an unmeet mate, even for the queen of Hungary," returned Balassi; "but his folly, after wearying the whole kingdom, hath worn out the patience, even of his uncle. However, here we enter the more frequented walks of the gardens, and it were better separate. Farewell; you will not fail to take advantage of any disaffection, among

the populace, in the towns, through which you travel, to embarrass the regent's government still further, by raising their minds to mutiny, and rebellion."

"I will exert my modicum of ability that way, you may rest assured, and hope to set to work, ere I leave Hermanstadt," answered Ragotzy. After reciprocal expressions of courteous regard, which, as it happened, might mean every thing or nothing, Count Balassi and the Cygani leader, made signs of leave-taking, and separated.

Suppose we accompany them, for a few paces, on their way, just to discover the nature of their cogitations.

"I penetrate that daring miscreant's polities," said the magnat, internally. "I see his drift : he thinks to make himself so useful, as to be indispensable ; and then, forsooth, these Cygani people must have granted them an equality of privileges, with the Magyari ; but once, by his means, let the nobles of Hungary get the upper hand, and Count Ragotzy—Count ! ha ! ha ! ha !—shall be arraigned, on many a bloody question. This precious race of vagrants shall be rooted out of the land ; the charter, they lay such stress upon, shall be abrogated ; and the leader, they take such pride in, shall feel the headsman's axe."

"Proud, despicable noble!" thought Count Ragotzy, in his secret soul, "I had difficulty to forbear thee so long. My gorge rose so, at thy arrogant bearing, that thy life was jeopardised, more than once, as we held speech together. And, thinkest thou, if Hungaria's weal moved me to this deed, that I would strip the purple off a single tyrant, (even were Martinuzzi such), and cast it among a hundred meaner despots, to divide into so many shreds and patches, as a type, at once, and an authority, for their several usurpations ? No ! for the happiness, and independence of the state, (with the exception of some score or two of factious grafs, like this Balassi), what rule could be better fitted, than that of Martinuzzi? Not

for thy benefit, misproud lord, nor that of thy overbearing order, did I conceive the noble enterprise, which I hope to carry into execution ; but because, as thou thyself saidst, in thine ignorance, the removal of Martinuzzi will leave the path open, on all sides. Yes, thou art right : the young queen must then be acknowledged, and her husband will be thy lord and master, my mighty magnat. Ay, Alaric Polgar will be the king of Hungary."

While raising these impalpable edifices, in the airy future, Ragotzy was so totally abstracted, from the more substantial interests of the present moment, that he was not a little startled, to find his visionary contemplations had carried him, right into the midst of a group of persons, assembled in the gardens of the palace.

These people were remarking, with no small marvel, a young cavalier of noble mien, and gallant bearing, who, with his arms folded across his breast, paced the margin of the river Zibin, beneath a grove of tall cypresses, that spired up, and glanced their foliage, in the glare, and fervour of the noon-day sun, like so many restless emeralds. The individual, in question, stopped, ever and anon, and then again walked pensively forward, as if his slow, and funereal tread was unconsciously keeping time, with the sullen current of his disturbed reflection. So conspicuously handsome was this man, and possessed of a physiognomy so remarkable, that, once beheld, his ineffaceable image would dwell in the memory for years, alike haunting the cheerful companioned day, and rising, like an unburied ghost, amid the visions of night. Though slightly built, and with a stature, hardly exceeding the middle height of man, his frame was sinewy, and agile. His features were well formed, and delicately chiselled, yet tinged to almost an Ethiopian hue. His mouth was compressed, as if by some strong internal effort, and small mustaches shaded the upper lip. His dark locks adjusted themselves to the shape of the head, which they enveloped,

excepting where, here and there, the short, close spiral of crisped curls elongated itself, about the nape of a throat, whose marble whiteness, the embroidered shirt-collar being thrown back, discovered to view. His small-tressed head, was most gracefully set upon his shoulders. His forehead was high, and full, and the somewhat oval cheek was exquisitely rounded, towards the chin. His eyebrows were large, and prominent, and from beneath their shadow, his black eyes glazed out with almost preternatural lustre, like two orbs of fire, whose expression, it were beyond the power of language to picture, being, at once, so intolerably fierce, and so exquisitely tender. This contrariety could hardly be exhibited, in one, and the same glance : but the alternation appeared so sudden, and instantaneous, as to produce, on the beholder, the effect of unity. Partly owing to this mutable expression, and partly to the undefined, though powerful character of his whole aspect, the individual, of whom we speak, was one, who, seen but for a minute, left an impression, which even the operation of time, might scarcely efface. The smile, so soft, and sunny, and that terrific frown, seemingly woven, like light and darkness, in the same countenance, were remembered, and spoken of, by the passenger, long after he had encountered them :

“ He would awaken at night,
With the dream of those ghastly eyes.” *

White-budding maidens, at their mother’s door, would tremble, as he passed, and follow him, with straining gaze, and a “ pleasing fear,”† till he was out of sight ; then, laying their hands on their fluttering bosoms, would sigh at thoughts, they dared not analyze, yet guessed not wherefore. Little children would stop short, in the midst of their gambols, to contemplate the stranger, with wonder, and instinctive awe ; and the fell assassin himself, would turn aside, in his midnight track, startled

* Southey.

† Byron.

and appalled, as at a visage, more ominous than his own. This individual was habited, according to the splendid, and picturesque costume of Spain, then much affected, by the cavaliers of the empire. His *jubon* fitted close to the body, and was composed of claret cloth; appended to this doublet were cuisses, or short skirts of white satin. Over this dress, he wore a light velvet mantle, of the colour of claret. His hat was embroidered round the crown, and brim, and looped up with pearls. Every article of this attire, was most lavishly passamented. Still, though a fastidious eye might detect some points, too richly overlaid, (which few, who remarked, how admirably his fine person became his “prodigal embroideries,”* would care to object), the over-abundant costliness must fairly be ascribed to the bias of the times, and not to any error, in the taste of the wearer. His age could not exceed one-and-twenty, and might be, under that period. Such was Marc Antoine Ferraro, secretary to Castaldo, Marquis of Piadena, the accredited ambassador, from Ferdinand of Austria, to the court of Hermanstadt. For above an hour, this individual traversed the grand lawn, fronting the palace, regardless of the passers by, to whom he soon became an object of no inconsiderable marvel; nor did he appear to be aware, that his wild and abstracted deportment, had attracted the attention of more than one knot of gazers, who were now drawn together, busying themselves, in eyeing the young secretary, with all due regard, to keeping their own distance.

“Holy Mary!” ejaculated a passenger, a middle-aged dame, as she flagged her steps, near one of those straggling coteries: “Holy Mary! did ever Christian see the like? The young gentleman is lunatic; yet mark how gallantly he looks it, with his tags, and embroidery. How pale, too!—and what a smile!—as from an angel.”

* Shirley.

"An angel! Ay, forsooth!—an angel in limbo, methinks;" interposed a mendicant friar, in a half-whisper, "or an angel, whose whereabouts shall be nameless; the blessed Virgin save us! I never before encountered such a savage look, and care not, to meet it again; but he is certainly crazed."

"Nay, my good father," put in the first speaker, "he's a proper lad, I maintain, only a little too dressy like;—but he'll know better, mayhap, as his beard thickens."

"Does any here know him?" inquired the friar.

"I'll warrant him, by the texture of his tissue," remarked a soldier, disabled in the late wars, "to be an Austrian; the sons of the Magyari, in our evil days, cannot afford such furbelows."

"Thou speakest sooth, comrade," exclaimed another voice, loudly, in the ear of the disbanded veteran; he turned,—a new comer had been added to the assembly. "Thou speakest sooth, I say."

"Why, ay," returned the soldier, "I'll be bound he is enrolled in the regent's mercenary band. A murrain seize the outlandish mannikin, *nemet ember, nem ember*,^{*} is a true saying, I see. What have we to do with a parcel of barbarian foreigners, I should like to know? It shows distrust in Martinuzzi."

"Why, sir, the kingdom's his," rejoined the new comer; "your lands, and chattels, nay, your very lives, are vassals to his pleasure. He had better have a care, however, of the storm, which hath still been gathering, and which now mutters its thunder, from yonder distant hills. There is an impulse working, for his ruin, will make itself triumphant. Behold ye it not?—hear ye it not? Already nation answers nation; and, lo! from many a deep, and hollow thoroughfare, the sound reverberates. It rushes hither, from Stamboul,—from Vi-

[†] Hungarian adage, signifying "A German man is no man."

enna, and the woods of Transylvania answer. Ha ! said I not well, friends ?”

The little knot of citizens drew back in a body, perfectly at a loss to comprehend, how any man could be so foolhardy, as to give utterance, to such language, at noon-day, in Hermanstadt. The individual, who excited this astonishment, was tall, and of majestic mien, but his person was carefully enveloped, in a motley sheep-skin cloak ; such as the richters, or chiefs of the neighbouring province of Wallachia, were accustomed to wrap about them. It was decorated, on the outside, with patches of leather, of divers sizes, and colours, and was faced, with fur of no ordinary price. The cape was of the finest wool, and was drawn so closely round the under part of the face, that it suggested the idea, of being intended for a disguise. If this was really the case, the object was not altogether attained, for the few points of his costume, which his muster-piece did not hide, betrayed an incongruity, that could not easily escape notice. He had on his head the *kalpac*, or Hungarian national cap, with a projecting front of black lambskin, which slouched, in an enormous shade, over his face, and was surmounted, by a small peacock’s feather. In his left hand, he held the *chakan*, or bludgeon, of considerable thickness. So far, there was nothing remarkable ; but the minutiae, we have described, were utterly out of keeping, with the *cshizmas*, or open boots, of the finest chamois leather, that graced his legs, and with the massive golden spurs, thereunto attached ; which singular, and ill-assorted union, indeed, seemed to give the lie direct, to his other accoutrements.

“ I tell ye,” continued this personage, with animation, whilst many of his auditors, not being ambitious of his lecture, or, perhaps, not caring to render themselves amenable to the arm of power, had either slunk away, one by one, in confusion, and remained loitering, at a short distance, or had fled the gardens entirely — ‘ sic

est mox vulgus'—"I tell ye, the avalanche is suspended, by a film, more subtle than gossamer—a breath disparts it, and the inundation is complete."

"Ay, ay," exclaimed the soldier, "it will shower down, on the city, one of these days, I'll warrant! St. Stephen be our protection! since, for my part, I see no other."

"There needs none," resumed the former, hotly; "neither devil, nor saint can aid ye; but you need neither."

The diminished crowd broke, into still smaller groups, as a low cry of terror was heard, in the direction of the palace. The orator, meanwhile, without heeding it, went on, in a louder tone.

"The close and stagnant air of disease, and putrefaction can only be rendered wholesome, by the hurricane. Tyranny may be borne for a strange term, but even tyranny hath its allotted period."

"The black!—the black!—the familiar of Father Dominick!" exclaimed some one with wild affright. And the next moment, several voices cried out, "If he be not coming towards us!—Look, there he is!—Holy Mary save us!—The black! the black!"

Our radical friend, not the less proceeded—

"I tell ye, countrymen"—but his information was necessarily stopped short, by the total dispersion of his audience, in all directions, like so many globules of quicksilver, at a touch.

As he pronounced these last words, in something of an exalted tone, he was surprised, to feel a heavy hand laid upon his shoulder. Reverting his head, his looks fell, on the dark visage of Scipio, the attendant of the dreaded Father Dominick. Obeying the sudden, and fierce impulse of the instant, the knight, involuntarily, cast his hand under his muster-piece, and, from thence, half drew forth a brilliant two-handed sword; but, observing a gathering crowd, at no great distance, he recollected himself, and, almost directly, resheathed it. The movement

was not, however, so quickly executed, but that the weapon attracted the eyes of Scipio, in whom the deepest excitation seemed to be suddenly produced by the sight.

"How came you by that?" he demanded, in an impetuous, and agitated voice.

The other, wrapping the cape of his mantle closer around the under part of his face, and pulling down his kalpac, so low over his brows, as to cast his eyes into shadow, answered, in a tone, which was intended to appear cool, and indifferent. "What's that to you, my sable questioner?" With these words, he brushed by his companion, and passed forward, at a quick pace.

The black instantly followed, and, coming up with him, the two men strode silently, side by side. For above a minute, the Ethiop sternly scanned him of the masterpiece. He again spoke, — "I have found, then, the murderer at last, and in thee!"

"I understand you not," replied the stranger, with apparent unconcern, and without stopping, or turning his head.

"Well, it skills not wasting words," rejoined the black. "You are now in the city, on Father Dominick's warrant of safe conduct, and it may not consist with his policy to break it; nevertheless, after this notice, if straightwise thou quittest not Hermanstadt, I will myself denounce thee to the tribunal of justice! — Avaunt thee, homicide!"

"Thou art under some delusion, friend; I assure you," answered the stranger; "we never met before in our lives; and, on such a point," he subjoined, scoffingly, "I suspect, I am likely to be the better judge: you know me not."

"A word in your ear," said the African. He drew cautiously nearer; and, remote as they were from observation, sunk his voice into a whisper, as he added, "we encountered on the night of the murder of Count Rodna."

The stranger half stopped short, and thrust his hand within his mantle-piece. "'Tis false!" he said, faintly. "Thou wast not present,—nor I."

"Whose spear is that, by thy side?" interrupted Scipio, again fixing on him a long, piercing look. "The good old man who once owned it, shall yet be avenged; but you may now depart." Having uttered this command, he abruptly halted beside a ruinous porchway, which, in other times, was the entrance of the royal palace, but of late years had been suffered to grow dilapidated. The other made a pause also.

"Do you hear?" repeated the African, in a louder and authoritative tone, motioning him away, with a high, and haughty sweep of his arm: "I would be alone."

The other hesitated, looked around him, for an instant, and then said, slowly, but joyously — "This chance will prove as good for me, as half thy revenues, counted in my coffers, thou mighty renegade! By my hand, Ferdinand sends you this!" With these words, he drew his sword, and rushed towards where the African had been standing, only a few seconds before. He had already, however, retired within the umbrage of the porch. The stranger pursued, but suddenly drew back, and gazed about him bewildered. The man, whom he had just destined for his victim, had vanished! The frustrate murderer presently turned about, and left the place. His steps were measured, until he had passed the wooded belt of the garden, when, immediately, with rapid strides, he hurried along the narrow street, and soon reached the barrier. Here, the sentinel on duty stopped him; but being in possession of the countersign, he was allowed to quit the city; and the last glance from Heaven, on that day, threw his gigantic shadow, upon horseback, along the wayside, many leagues distant, from the city of Hermanstadt.

A few minutes after the departure of the stranger, Scipio, was again, in the gardens of the palace, and stood, at Ferraro's side, ere the other knew of his approach. "Boy! look up!" cried the African, in a loud voice.

Waking from his reverie, with a start, Ferraro looked around.

"So thou art come," he said, in a tone, that seemed deeply agitated, by his melancholy reflections. "I have been some time waiting."

"You are to blame," observed the black, "to make yourself the general spectacle:—your vagaries have been the subject of observation, to the accidental passengers, for the last half hour."

"It matters not; all is over," returned Ferraro, and he hung his head, as if in hopeless despondency.

"What can have happened, to unhinge thy mind to this degree?" demanded the African.

"Art thou wise?" said Ferraro; "if so, leave me to my fate."

"Never!" answered Scipio. Then, in a more persuasive accent, he continued, "Come, come, be advised—tell me, the source of these throes of sorrow: methinks thou canst feel none, I cannot remedy,—perhaps, do not already guess."

"Thou liest, old man," answered the other, with yet greater distemperature of manner,—"this grief is beyond thy ken. Thy words are ever false; they soothe my senses, indeed, for the instant, but they are breath, and leave no monument behind: thou shouldst blush, through that visage of thine, were it begrimed, as with the smoke of hell, for having lured me on, day after day, as in a dream. Oh! what a dolt was I, to suppose, that thou hadst power to save me from the brink! Ere your honeyed words taught me to hope, I was content—ay, content, though wretched. Now! I have indulged myself in dreams of transport, which, to realize, the paradise of the false prophet, were well fortified. I will not have my dazzling, and heaven-capped visions topple from their base;—'twas you first set me on to build them. If they dissolve," he concluded, in a paroxysm of emotion, which had in it something almost frantic,—"may the vast ruin crush you!"

"I know, it was no light matter I engaged for," re-

plied the black ; “ but I repeat, Ferraro, that the Queen of Hungary shall, one day, be yours.”

“ One day, say you !” echoed Ferraro, with a yell of agony. “ Ay, the one day, which yonder planet has already worn to the dregs ;—this day, or never!— Did not the angel, you have in pay, tell you so much?— I have had presents from the Marquis Piadena.”

“ Well,” said the African, in a calm voice.

“ Do you hear?—from the Imperial court!”

“ Well,” repeated the other, with imperturbable gravity: “ Well, well!— and is that all? I tell you, these despatches, writ in gall, brewed from the infernal Styx, bear my damnation. Can your wisdom divine how?”

“ Coloswar is invested,” replied the black ; “ and, further, the army of your royal master, by forced marches, hath entrenched itself at Alba Julia.”

“ Man !” ejaculated Ferraro, in an accent of uncontrolled wonder. There was silence for above a minute; at length the secretary again spoke : “ So, black magician! what besides ?” And the impassioned youth stood, with his arms folded, whilst he awaited the other’s answer.

It was almost instantly rendered. “ In consequence of the absence of the Marquis of Piadena, you are invested with authority, by your king, to declare war, in his name, unless, without reservation, certain conditions be complied with.”

“ Black magician !” said Ferraro, with a look of increased astonishment, and awe ; and in a voice, whose tones were far deeper, and more concentrated, than before ; “ Can you name those conditions ?”

“ The immediate deposition of the daughter of John, and Isabella, in favour of Martinuzzi, who is to hold his crown, as tributary vassal to Ferdinand. That is the first condition.

“ The second is the cession of Transylvania, to the crown of Austria, on the demise of Martinuzzi.”

"Verily, thou hast not been misinformed," exclaimed Ferraro, with bitterness, "let thy information come from what fiend it may. However, say on; what instructions besides?"

"You are ordered, in case these terms (as is well taken for granted) be rejected, forthwith to demand your safe-conduct, and proceed hence, without loss of time, to join the Austrian army, of which Castaldo hath already assumed the command."

"And you know all this?" shouted Ferraro, in a voice of thunder. "Grant, my punishment was ordained, were there no bolts but these to hurl, at my devoted head? By the red expiation of my soul, 'tis past endurance! I rob my adored Czerina of her kingdom! I rudely snatch her coronet, from her beauteous head! I remain at her court, like an infernal lie, as an assurance of peace, betwixt the two kingdoms, whilst Ferdinand marches an hostile army, into the heart of the country! Now, what say you, to this accumulation of horrors, thou never-failing mediciner?"

Ferraro ceased, and, with a gaze of unutterable anguish, looked in the face of his sable counsellor. Scipio remained mute. There was solitude over that landscape. The gardens of the palace were deserted, and as they glared on one another, with a meteoric, and similar expression, in both their eyes, they offered no bad image of two of the enemies of man, met, on this nether sphere, to consult about the kidnapping of human souls.

The African was the first to speak. "Ferraro," he said, in a solemn voice, "it is the part of a coward to despair; the brave man hopes on to the end. The chances of *time* flit along the horizon of his life, till time is no more; perhaps, indeed, he may not clutch them, but they soothe the fancy, nevertheless; or, when they delude no longer, there is *eternity!*"

"Dost preach?" exclaimed Ferraro, in a transport of passion.

"Yet, bear with me, my young friend," resumed the

black. “ If, what I have just divined, be all your difficulty, it need not distress you.”

“ How ?” returned the secretary, breaking in with increasing wildness of speech, and gesture—“ Not distress me, to depose Czerina by force of arms, and despoil her of her royal inheritance ! What do you dream of ?”

“ The conditions annexed to peace may be accepted,” observed the black.

“ No, ’tis vain to reckon on that, than which no dream is less substantial,” said Ferraro, after a moment’s pause; “ ’twould brand the proud name of Martinuzzi, with everlasting infamy, for him to stoop so low, as to become the servile minister of a foreign court.”

“ Perhaps so ; yet continue not in error, Ferraro,” said the black ; “ those conditions of peace, you will lay before Martinuzzi, *will* be subscribed.”

“ Away ! thou dost malign the regent,” answered Ferraro, with the enthusiasm which belonged to his character ; “ thou dost him foul wrong, sir. The guardian and protector turn usurper ? Never ! Martinuzzi prove false to himself, and his country ? No, sir ! He knows too well what he owes to his exalted reputation, to wreck it, on such pitiful ambition. Indeed, you belie him ; he is not the man to comprise, in one bad deed, all that is dis- honourable, and cruel.”

Scipio looked upon his enthusiastic companion, for a minute, without replying. At length, with a deep solemnity of manner, he made answer—“ The exact measure of iniquity that enters into any act, can be known, Antoine, only to the Searcher of all hearts ; the best of us are but men, and liable to the infirmities of human nature ; and are not to be tried by the standard of their own, sometime, and, perchance, short-lived perfection, which were a criterion, more adapted to the unfaltering purity of angels. Trust me, Martinuzzi *will* subscribe the terms proposed, by your royal master.”

The African spoke slowly, and earnestly ; and a pause

ensued, which he broke, by abruptly asking, as if at the suggestion of a sudden thought—"Have you explained the situation of your heart, to the fair lady of your love? Believe me, as matters stand, it is your only course. The sooner you prevail, on the lady Czerina, to give you a title to protect her, the better for herself. Seek her, as near her solitude, as you may penetrate. Have you yet spoken out?"

"Ah! my friend," answered Ferraro, "what need of words, to make her understand, how I do languish for her? If," he proceeded, in a strain, and accent of the deepest feeling, "if she cannot read the state of my affections, in the long-drawn sigh, that will not be suppressed—in the vainly-guarded glances of unutterable devotion, which will escape me, when I am near her—in the voluptuous trembling of my frame—in the flush, with which an inadvertent word suffuses me, and the deep paleness, which succeeds—in the moving languor, which subdues me in her presence—in my broken speech, and in the, still more prevailing, eloquence of silence—in my departed spirits, and in my declining health—surely, my friend, if appeals, like these, can't touch the sympathy of woman, 'twere a waste of breath, to unlock the fountains of the sealed-up heart, and speak."

"Ah! Ferraro," said the African, evincing the strongest symptoms of interest, and compassion, "were my life-blood necessary, to obtain thee the hand of the young queen, so Heaven deal with me, in my need! if I would not submit my neck to the headsman's axe, or the assassin's steel, both of which, God wot how difficultly, I have for so many years evaded. Still, let not this thing dull the current of thy young blood, but speak to the lady. There is a minute—such omnipotence hath sympathy over the female heart—in which a lover's presence is irresistible, and when he will not woo in vain."

"Alas! my friend," returned Ferraro, "Ixion like, I gaze on loved Czerina, till my heart is scorched. I dare

presume no more, and feel it is almost blasphemy, even in my dreams, to clasp her shadow."

"I believe," replied the black, "I can imbue you with a motive, sufficiently startling, to oblige you to penetrate the cloud of her divinity, and embrace a substance for thy pains."

"What doth thy speech imply?" inquired the secretary.

"This much; that unless you speedily come to explanation with the lady, she will be compelled to surrender her hand to Solyman."

"What say you?" demanded Ferraro, in the hollow tones of anguish, and amazement.

"I tell you, the Sultan asks the queen of Hungary in marriage," answered the black.

"Then, God help her!" said Ferraro, in solemn accents; "and God preserve my poor senses; for fate, it seems, has taken her side—the side of wrong and misery. Yet, how can you suppose, the knowledge of my passion might avert the destruction of us both?"

"Why," replied the black, "were she conscious, that your arms were unto her, as a haven, the strong necessity of her heart would bid her stand at bay, and laugh to derision, the menaces of Isabella."

"Whose!" exclaimed Ferraro.

"The queen dowager," replied the black.

"Ha! and is that it?" cried Ferraro, with increasing energy, and haste; "then this alliance you speak of, Scipio, is of her mother's concocting, is it?"

"The queen regent has entered into a sort of treaty, with Solyman, the main stipulation of which is, the sacrifice of Czerina."

"How know you this?" demanded Ferraro.

"I overheard Isabella expatiate largely to her daughter, on the advantage of the connection."

"You overheard this, my friend!" cried Ferraro, in amazement. "Do you mean, that you were present?"

"I believe, I must acknowledge as much," answered the black, with a grim smile.

"Sacred Providence!" cried Ferraro; "was Czerina a party to her mother's views?"

"She protested she would sooner die, than suffer, in her person, such a profanation of the sacrament of marriage."

"That's some comfort, yet," said Ferraro.

"But," rejoined the African, "she will find herself too feeble to resist, for any length of time, the arts, and rage of Isabella." He paused, and then, in a tone of greater depth, and seriousness than before, continued—"The autumn leafage, fallen in yonder basined lake, whirls, ever and anon, upon the eddying breeze, oscillating, hither and thither, between wind and water; yet must be ultimately wafted along upon the ripples of the current: thus Czerina's mind, however it may struggle, to and fro, for awhile, will finally set, in the direction of her mother's wishes. On you, depends her only chance of deliverance; be the result what it may, declare yourself immediately: do so, lest you—I would say, lest Maximilian, Count Pereny, anticipate you."

"Ha!" exclaimed Ferraro.

"Do so," continued the black, "ere some brigand chief, so plentiful in these bad, and broken times, forestall your purposes."

"What mean you?" cried Ferraro.

"Do so," proceeded the black, without noticing the interruption, "ere Isabella take effectual means, to prevent you."

The glow faded, from Ferraro's cheek; he moved one step backwards, as if struck, by something, in the black's last observation, and observed—"Then will I confess: pray Heaven, as you say, it be not already too late. If Isabella discover my love, for her daughter, I am undone; for, oh! my friend, learn that—" Here, arresting the current of his speech, Ferraro stopped short, like one,

who is afraid of committing himself. “No, for shame ! Ferraro,” he subjoined, in a lower key, “that were unworthy of me to allude to.”

“What must I believe ?” demanded the black, hastily.

“It boots not now to tell,” returned Ferraro, with assumed indifference ; “only if the queen regent should obtain a knowledge of my passion, for the lady Czerina, there remains not the remotest chance, that the star of my love will be propitious.”

The African listened attentively, but, with the countenance of a man, lost in profound, and anxious rumination. “A painful idea flashes on me,” he muttered, musingly, in a hoarse, and altered tone—“ ‘Tis, indeed,” he said, affecting a calmness, he was far from feeling, “a fatal quicksand, on which you have cast your hopes. But—” Here the accents of the black swelled into sternness, and he raised up his clenched hands, as he inquired, with vehemence, “Who gave you permission, sir ?” Then, breaking off, in some confusion, after a minute’s pause, he ejaculated to himself, with strong agitation of manner, although in a suppressed voice—“Oh cursed ! in every way—in retrospect—in prospect. Both, too !”

The young secretary looked on, amazed, for a moment, and then, impatient of the conference, intimated, that even whilst he spake, the regent had promised to allow him an audience. The two shortly separated, the black, with a saddened brow, striking into the deepest of the neighbouring thickets; and Ferraro, as Scipio disappeared from view, taking the nearest path, that led to the Gothic keep of Hermanstadt.

Antoine Ferraro, early an orphan, was the grandson, on the mother’s side, and pupil, of the celebrated historian, Jerome Lascus, erewhiles palatine of Seradia. The adventures, and hair-breadth scrapes of that personage, fall not within the scope of our story. His life had been in imminent danger, from the dungeon of Solyman, the tor-

tures of John of Zapola, and the poisonous medicaments of Sigismund, king of Poland, his native sovereign. For the last few years of his eventful, and protracted pilgrimage, he had resided in Vienna, on a small pension, allowed him, in consideration of his counsel, and services, by the archduke Ferdinand. It was long since reported, throughout Europe, that the lamented statesman had fallen a victim to his hardships, and misfortunes, and the secret of his continued existence was only promulgated, to a very few of his most assured, and intimate friends.

On the Marquis of Piadena being appointed ambassador to Hermanstadt, Lascus's interest obtained, for his grandson, the situation of secretary to that nobleman. At parting, Ferraro was enjoined, by his venerable preceptor, to seek out, in the capital of Transylvania, a friend of his father's; and recommended, at the same time, to take no measure of importance, without that person's concurrence.

"And who, and what may be this individual?" inquired Ferraro.

"An African," answered Lascus, "at present in the service of the holy confessor of cardinal Martinuzzi. Resort to him, in all times of inquietude, and peril, as you would to me, were you in Vienna."

"A menial were a fine counsellor, truly, for one, who wears chain and spurs!" exclaimed Ferraro, with no little disdain.

"He is not what he seems," rejoined Lascus. "Respect my wishes, Antoine, in giving heed to that man. He is your fate!"

This request, so solemnly enjoined, was not disregarded. From the moment of Ferraro's introducing himself to the notice of the black, he felt drawn towards him, by an impulse, the force of which he could neither understand, nor oppose. The attendant of Father Dominick, obtained an influence over him, so powerful, that into his ears he freely confided all his most treasured thoughts, and wishes, till,

in an evil hour, he yielded to a temptation, that shame, and honour, alike forbade his communicating to his sable intimate. But when, subsequently, the true flame of his passion for the queen of Hungary, absorbed and swallowed up, like the rod of Aaron, the false, and sensuous incantations which preceded it, Ferraro made the black the confidant of his audacious love, and was encouraged, by that mysterious man, to prosecute his suit, in the certainty of not being refused her royal hand, by her guardian, if he could only obtain her own consent, to make him king of Hungary.

We will now return to where we left the young secretary, proceeding with all speed, to his interview with Martinuzzi. The mere distance he had to traverse, was not great; nevertheless, it took him some time to surmount all the embarrassments of the ruinous street—and this period he employed, in endeavouring to collect his scattered thoughts, that he might play his part, with proper dignity, in the impending conference, with the regent. To his discretion, was entrusted the majesty of Austria, and however, in his secret soul, he might scorn the duplicity of Ferdinand, it was not for him, in his sacred capacity, to betray his sentiments, or to derogate, from the honour of the sovereign, who employed him, by any admission of his treachery. Still, he could not but be conscious, that he was charged with a commission, in the highest degree, dangerous, and delicate, and his generous mind revolted, at having to palliate, or rather justify, so atrocious a proceeding, as the invasion of the territory of an ally, with the object of dethroning the sovereign, and despoiling her of her dominions.

The prize, held out to the ambition of the regent, he looked upon, as no less disgraceful, in his court, to offer, than beneath the dignity of Martinuzzi, to accept. He adhered most constantly, and inflexibly to his first opinion, that the proposition, he had to submit, would be rejected, with unqualified disdain. Still, after his late conference,

with Scipio, he could not shut out ideas of an opposite kind, nor help wishing, that Martinuzzi might, in this instance, not act up, to those exalted preconceptions of his character, which his actions had inspired. Yet, when he further came to reflect, that that side of the alternative, involved the deposition of his adored Czerina, he could only accuse himself of selfishness, in contemplating the possibility of such an issue, with any feelings of satisfaction. And yet, Ferraro did regard the contingency of Martinuzzi's acquiescence, in the demands of Ferdinand, with a partial gleam of undefined, and ineffable delight. Would not the very fact of the young queen's resignation of her crown, pave the way for his pretensions, by rendering her a more legitimate object of ambition? And would not he remain in Hermanstadt, in peace, instead of having to enter the city, through carnage, and in triumph? Thus, he pondered within himself, and who, with such happiness in prospect, could turn away his mind, at the voice of principle, and not cherish, with Ferraro, a confused hope, that the indulgence of his passions might, by some means or other, yet in the womb of fate, be found compatible with his public duty,* and that circumstances would reconcile, and subserve, his secret purposes?

Presently, these sanguine considerations, which had just flowed, with the most plenteous tide, began to ebb; and again Ferraro argued, with a curdling of the blood, that the injured maiden would never endure the presence of a man, who, by her dethronement, had put a sudden date to the regal dynasty, of which she was the illustrious representative. Would she condescend, to return the affections of one, who came, like a mildew, in the hands of tyranny, to blight her fair leaves of promise? Yet, again, where-

* It has ever been the problem of life, how to make probity and gratification cohere; but it cannot be worked, for as Lord Shaftesbury well observes, "The rules of harmony will not permit it. The dissonancies are too strong."—Charact. part. 4, § 2.—*Freedom of Wit,*

fore suffer his thoughts, to glance that way? What signified his bewailing the wretchedness of this chance, when it was more probable, he continued, in gloomy foreboding, that the stern virtue of Martinuzzi was destined, to present him, with ampler matter, for his future ruminations, and despair? Oh! it was too evident, his hard fate would never more connive, at his feeding, in rapt extacy, on each graceful motion of Czerina's form, till his whole soul seemed to himself dissolving away, before the beautiful vision.—He would never!--But here the train of Ferraro's lamentations was necessarily broken. His thoughts had carried him so far, as to a species of ante-room, or vestibule, and thence they inducted him into the audience closet of the cardinal.

MANUSCRIPT VII.

" It is the devil's part to suggest ; ours not to consent :—as often as we resist him, so often we overcome him ; as often as we overcome him, so often we bring joy to the angels, and glory to God ; who opposeth us, that we may contend, and assisteth us, that we may conquer."—ST. BERN. *in Ser.*

" Hinc jam toto orbe profugus Perenus, nec ullus ei tutus ad latendum supererat locus."—RUFIN. lib. i. c. 16.

" Pectora cui credam ? Quis me lenire docebit
Mordacas curas ? Quis longam fallere noctem
Dulcibus alloquis ?"—*Silv. Lib. Milton.*

"Οψιν ἰδεῖν ἐφεπωσάν οἱ παράλογον οστις αὐτὸν πεπων
ἡ θεων εἴη τὸ δὲ φάσμα εἰπεῖν, οσός ὁ Βροῦτε ὀδίμων
κυκός.—ΑΠΠΙΑΝ.

It is a remark, which has been so often iterated, from the earliest era, down to the present day, as almost to have slid into an adage, that whereas poets picture the golden age, whilst the world was yet young, so childhood is the golden season of human life. But, although this analogy may hold correct, in part, it is far from being universally predictable. Not to mention the thousands, and tens of thousands, of little human creatures, from the sweat of whose young brows, the wealth of nations is painfully distilled, (as we are neither penning a satire, nor a sermon, we need not be more explicit), and who, ere the waters of baptism are dry upon their heads,—yea, with their mother's milk yet warm on their livid lips, begin their unhallowed task ; and, through years of helplessness, hopelessly, toil

on, till precocious passion dawns, to redeem their captivity, at once gilding, with its false hectic, the sombre colouring of their lives, and, with its fruitless stings,* spurring them forward, to the close. Not to insist on such, let us glance our mind's eye, on those children of competence, who are presumed to commence their lives, under happier auspices. But, in this survey, however, we may persuade ourselves, we can only determine of the whole, by a limited induction of particulars.

In the spring of life, however regretful the current of our days, sorrow has scarce had time, to leave his distinguishing traces, in the lines of our countenances,—the physiognomy is yet unformed, and that secret, “ which weighs on the heart,” but which cannot be gathered, from the features, it were in vain to seek, in the confession of the sufferer. There is seldom much sympathy between the child, and the adult. Neither are their joys mutual, nor sorrows, in common; and, when sympathy is withheld, or believed to be so, by what conjuration can confidence be induced? Youth is more frequently the season of reserve, than people imagine; and the young heart, in, by far the greater part of its depths, remains a holy, and hidden thing, only known to its Omniscient Searcher. Grief and anxiety do not, it is true, commonly lay an invincible hold of us, in childhood. The elasticity of that early period of existence, will soon procure an interval of repose, which, however, be it remembered, is no less transient, than the anguish which preceded it. Indeed, it may fairly be made a question, whether the briefness of infantile sorrow can counterpoise its degree of agony, or compensate, for the frequency of its recurrence. “ The tear forgot as soon as shed,” we do not believe in; but if the experience of the reader be happier than our own, let him recollect, how many a scalding, though, (we grant) causeless, tear blots the fair page of the history of child-

* *Infructuosis affectuum spinis.—BOETHIUS.*

hood. We are persuaded, that the judgments conceived of the disposition, and state of mind of the juvenile portion of society, by their nearest connections, are often fallacious, and too hastily imbibed; they contemplate the habits of the helpless being, under their control, through too close, and therefore a delusive medium, which discolours, and perverts, the object; and are apt to reconcile, and accommodate, whatever fall under their observation, to some hastily conceived theory, with which, not once in a hundred instances, will they be found, exactly, to quadrate.

Thus, building, with inadequate materials, a baseless edifice of character, and disposition, and grasping some shadowy semblances, they early begin to fashion the mind, and heart, of their young disciple, according to their pre-onceptions, and ever afterwards, misinterpret all his minutest words, and indifferent actions; viewing them, not as they are, but according to the nice, and deceptious microscope of parental, or kindred prejudice. It is astonishing the injustice, that is, not seldom, committed, by these false constructions, and the puerile grief and indignation to which they give rise, are more excessive, than the injured party cares to acknowledge. But, were there no other cause, than the abject state of subjection, to which the free will of children is condemned, in, what is called, civilized society, that were more than sufficient to countervail every incentive to happiness, whether springing, from the accident of prosperity, or the more intrinsic advantage of a lively temperament.

“ But children near their parents tremble now,
Because they must obey.”*

By no latitude of the imagination, can we fancy, that the incomparable, and immortal men, who, in the seven-

* Shelley.

teenth century, walked England, like so many spirits of a higher sphere, passed the spring-tide of their days in happiness;—they, who enacted the “*facinus tam illustre*,” of Milton,—to use the words of Wordsworth—

“ The later Sydney, Marvel, Harrington,
Young Vane and others, who called Milton friend ;”

or those many other illustrious characters, to whose memorable example, (under God), this country hath stood indebted, down to the present day, for that dogged spirit of independence, which, it is to be believed, will ever characterize her sons.—Could the imperious discipline, and summary dealing of brief authority, have made the wholesome element of their minds?—Could they have cheerfully submitted to the tyranny of unmerited castigation? Impossible. For our own part, we are free to confess, though rear'd, with exclusive care, under the parental wing, in that “golden mediocrity”* of station, which “nor mean, nor riotous,”† is equally removed, from the torrid heat of the fashionable nursery, and the frost-bitten atmosphere of the work-house; still, we would not live our days of vassalage over again; no, not to be heir to all the land, that lies between the four corners of broad England.

“ Ah! what avails heroic deed?
What liberty? if no defence
Be won for feeble innocence.
Father of all! if wilful man must read
His punishment in soul distress,
Grant to the morn of life its natural blessedness !”‡

We have now to advert to circumstances, which happened, long antecedent to the opening of our history.

* *Aurea mediocritas.*—HORACE.

† Ford.

‡ Wordsworth.

The high constable, Hubert Vicchy,* Duke of Eissenburg, had been several years governor of Temeswar, when John of Zapola died. He was the main-spring of the abortive movement of Valentine Turascus, in favour of the queen regent, which we briefly noticed, in our introductory chapter. His duchess was a lady, of whom, it might be difficult to say, whether the graces of her person, or her mental endowments, were more admirable. But these virtues were only the shining sins of a heretic. Her firm, and inquisitive understanding had not shrunk from polemics; and the new teachers, who professed to revive the old truths of the Gospel, taught her to abjure that admixture of error, and those “weak inventions of the enemy,” with which, they affirmed, that the simplicity, and purity of the Christian faith, during the long night of Gothic ignorance, had been contaminated, and overlaid. From her cradle, the daughter of Veronica had the virtues, and faith of her mother wound into her fair form; and the trials of her subsequent life only rivetted those intermediate links, in the chain of evidence, which bound her pious spirit to the vital truths of the reformed religion.

The reader may marvel, how such a woman came to unite her fate with one, who was ignorant of the lowest elements of literature; — but the wonder will subside, if our fair critic will please, to look a little closer, into the state of society, in Hungary, in the sixteenth century, and ask herself, seriously, how she would like, to have been debarred, entering the blessed state of holy matrimony, simply because the young gentleman, who solicited the honour of her hand, happened (like most of his compeers) to have left uncultivated the *belles lettres*?

* The Christian appellation, which this person bears in history, is Peter, for which, lest the reader should confound the principal characters of our tale, we have substituted the name of Hubert. We have already risked introducing two Peters, which, however, is the fault of their godfathers and godmothers, and none of ours.

When we are told, owing to the disorders, which accumulated on the country, subsequent to the battle of Mohacs, that no fewer than seven bishops* flourished, in a most unorthodox state of incertitude, as to the distinctive characters of the alphabet ; it cannot be made a matter of surprise, that the feudal barons, who were military men, were content to repose, in the lethargy of ignorance, without coveting a greater degree of erudition, than was exacted, by the opinions of the age, and which, they saw, might suffice their “ spiritual pastors and masters.” If this explanation fail to reconcile the difficulty, we can only regret, that the stubborn nature of historical truths must preclude us, were we the most daring legendary, from forbidding the banns.

Whether Vicchy deferred invariably to his gifted partner’s depth of sagacity, or firmness of mind, we are not instructed to state ; and this expressive silence of contemporary satire, furnishes such strong presumption to the contrary, as ought, by rights, to more than outweigh, in the scale of evidence, any loose, and floating atoms of later scandal. It is likely, however, that the natural influence, which a strong, will insensibly obtain, over a feebler understanding, if moving in the same orbit, may have exercised a salutary restraint upon Vicchy, and that, on many occasions, he found the *domus et placens uxor*, the softening sense, and silken trammels of home, sustain his wavering resolution.

It was shortly after that period, when his outlawry had been decreed, by the states of Transylvania, that the death of Veronica cut him out, from those moorings of the heart, whose cable alone held his vacillating passions, in the roadstead of virtue, and discretion, and set his soul adrift, upon the waves of life, at the mercy of the

* These were the Bishops of Waradin, Agria, Five Churches, Nitria, Javarin, Alba Julia, and Chonad. Libentius intuentur Martham quam Marcam ; malunt legere in Salmone quam in Solomone. — ALANUS de Art. Pred.

first shifting gale, that sprung up, let it blow, from what quarter of the heavens it listed.

Veronica of Eissenburg, from the time of her mother's death, to the midnight hour, in which we first introduced the maiden, *en dishabille*, to the blushes of our readers, had been the constant, and cheerful companion, and friend, of her blasted, dishonoured, and outcast father. Whilst, close, and closer, in the clouds of adversity, and error, that father wrapt himself, from the contemplation of the present, and the prospect of the future, she would dry those orbs, veiled by the dim suffusion of mortality,* and shed a glory, round the deepening infamy of his path, as the “hastening angel” might be supposed to hallow the declining footsteps of our first parents, in their solitary way from Eden. Nor did she, at last, cease from her ministering office, when the object of all her solicitude too visibly displayed the mire, and rust, which, during his travail in a defiling world, his soul had contracted. “The sworded angel” turned back, at the gates of paradise, and abandoned our guilty ancestors to “the fruit of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste brought death into the world.” He was deterred, by the black, and heavy mists of sin, and mortality, which, like a mantle, shrouded the horizon of this low earth. Not so Veronica.—She only adhered the more steadfastly, in her patient devotedness, to the slightest wishes of her sire, as the faculties of mind and body began to expand, and she became more sensible of the debasing character of sin, and involuntarily grasped the conviction of Vicchy's frailty. If his crimes were manifold, utter likewise was his defeature; and, though the goods of this life melted away,—though followers, and friends fell off, and the whole world forsook him,—though Justice shook her strong steel, and waved it, like the

* Lumina ejus mortalium rerum nube caligantia turgamus. —
BOETHIUS.

cherub's fiery sword of yore, for a barrier from paradise,— “ though the earth quaked, and the sea saw it, and fled,” — though the hills “ reeled to and fro like a drunken man,” — though, with raven wing, Despair circled his motions, and hell itself, as it were, yawned to swallow him, his child (as, of old, the gentle Antigone tended her blind, and wandering sire*) would prop, and lead him on, amid the wilderness of life; and, whether he pitched his tabernacle in the outlaw's cave, or the peasant's hovel, or was chained down to the captive's cell, there would Innocence, and Love sit brooding over him, with halcyon wings, to allay to peace the waters of bitterness, on which his soul was tossed; — ay, even in the central darkness of a dishonoured grave, her pious offices would avail to embalm, and emblazon his memory, and her affections, hovering nigh, would hang about his hearse, like plumed pennons.

At the time, that Vicchy was cited to surrender himself to trial, the life of his Veronica was hovering on the confines of two worlds. Thus circumstanced, he naturally refused, while the vital spark “ lit her mortal frame,” to quit her death-bed. In consequence, the summary proceeding of his outlawry intervened, and inspired him, with sentiments of implacable enmity to that state, which, without evidence or trial, had thus thrust him, beyond the pale of her society, and the protection of her laws. He vowed, in his secret soul, he would lie in wait, for a day of retribution; but his opportunities, in that regard, long fluctuated, with the vicissitudes of his life. As a vessel, intercepted in its course, by opposing winds, Hubert's characteristic indecision operated, when his hopes were at the flood, to suspend, till the time for action had escaped, his powers of volition.

“ Qualiter hinc gelidus Boreas, hinc nubifer Eurus,
Vela trahunt, nutat mediæ fortuna carinæ.”†

* See the *Œdipus Coloneus*.

† Statius, *Theb.* lib. 1.

This may go far to explain, why “ all the courses of his life were bound in shallows, and in misery.”

One of the ancients* has remarked, that it is in human life, as in a game at tables,—and the analogy would seem to hold good in a sense, that was not contemplated. The utmost skill, or the finest schemes, that can be laid by human wisdom, may be alike neutralized, and perverted, where the chances of the game are against us ; while, on the other hand, even a series of good fortune supposes a certain felicitous daring, in the person whom it befalls; and the highest cast of the die were thrown in vain, unless the player be gifted with the happy rashness, to seize the occasion, and improve his advantage.

Somewhat in conformity, with this way of thinking, was an opinion, which formerly prevailed, that Fortune ever lent her aid to the prudent;† nor should the fine and deep reflection of Fontenelle, to the same purpose, be lost sight of,—“ Ces bons hasards,” he says, “ ne sont que pour ceux qui jouent bien.”

From all we can gather of his character, Vicchy must have answered, badly, Dr. Johnson’s idea of “ a good hater,” although, in the sad varieties of his subsequent career, while yielding to every temptation of circumstance, he wrapped himself, from the upbraidings of his own heart, by saying, and believing, that he was only varying his means, the better to ascertain that vengeance, to which, in reality, he had become wholly indifferent.

Whilst his prospects gradually became black, and comfortless, on all sides, Crime, alternated with superstitious devotion in his bosom, as day with night, in some dark cemetery. At one time, he would take Satan’s wages, to satisfy the idolatrous worship of gold, the *auri sacra fames*, which informed, and animated the minutest of his undertakings, and would, soon after, appease the antagonist

* Plutarch.

† πασιν ευφρονούσι συμπαχει τυχη.—Frag. Vet. Poet.

principle of his nature, by offering the accursed coin, on the altar, *pro remedio animæ suæ*. Alas ! how will not fortune, and circumstance degrade the original excellence of our common humanity, to a level with the foulest aspect of the outer world ! How will not time break down the stubborn spirit, no less than the marble column ! We find the man, through whose hands once circulated the revenue of a prince, coveting, in his adversity, a single ducat, with such “itchy palm,” as to tamper, with his soul’s health, for the sake of its possession !

For months subsequent to the death of the Duchess of Eissenburg, and the outlawry of her husband, we are compelled, for want of materials, to grope our way very much in the dark, during which space of time, we often lose sight of Vicchy. It would seem, however, from the slight, and incidental notice of contemporary annalists, that he had not long taken up his abode in Poland, ere the spirit of change seized him, and, after some hesitation, and the necessary delays of a few weeks, in equipping for so formidable a migration, Hubert, as we shall still occasionally call him, and his little girl, on horseback, accompanied by a guide, and two sumpter mules, for the purpose of transporting their baggage, commenced their route, upon the morning of a sultry summer’s day. Their daily progress was measured, by the ability, or sluggishness of the animals who bore them, and we have briefly to pass over the interval of a fortnight, whereof, here needs no account. Towards the close of that period, however, our travellers fell in with an adventure, which somewhat broke the monotonous *agrément* of their pilgrimage.

The incident, we allude to, may as well be inserted, in this place, and, since it gave a fresh impulse to the ruin of Vicchy, and has besides a considerable bearing, on the mysteries of our story, we shall take leave, to lay it before the reader, with some circumstantiality.

On the evening of the twelfth day, from their first setting out, Vicchy, and his daughter had arrived, within a few

hours' travel of the city of Coloswar. The weather had all along proved remarkably propitious, but this day, on the contrary, the sun's disk was obscured in lurid, and accumulated clouds, which, fallen, and diffused into a uniform haze, seemed charged with matter, for tempest, and storm. The ineffectual struggle of the sun's rays soon ceased; and long, ere the hour, when he should have sunk below the horizon, a sylvan, and mountainous country might be discerned, with difficulty. Vicchy had calculated on reaching Coloswar, or, at least, the immediate neighbourhood of that city, ere nightfall, but the misty twilight which thus early unrolled itself, upon hill and dale, and the rapid drops of rain, which, somewhat abruptly, inflicted a severe drenching on our travellers, induced them to look out, with no small anxiety, for some nearer place of shelter for the night. The discomforts of their situation, would alone have been sufficient to urge them to this; but, in addition, the horse, which their guide rode, had thrown his forefoot shoe, and, despite their utmost vigilance, it was difficult to distinguish the direction of their journey, through a country, which particles of sleet, and mist, shrouded in bewildering darkness. Moreover, the horses could hardly keep their feet, along the tracks of jungle, and knolls, intercepted, at every turn, with swelling streams, lashed by the irritating elements, into sheets of foam. As they struggled forward, they came up with three foot passengers. Whilst crossing a narrow bridge, which brought their persons sensibly nearer, Veronica pointed them out, to her father, who immediately accosted them, inquiring, whether they could tell of any *kortsma*,* or monastery, or other place of shelter, thereabouts, where a night's lodging might be procured?

"What would you have of us?" interrogated one of the trio, in a voice, that betokened disguise.

Vicchy repeated his question.

* Inn.

"We are strangers in these parts, like yourselves ; but I trow there be no hostelry, nor religious order either, between this, and Coloswar," was the cold, and evasive response of another of these pedestrians.

"Hold well to your saddle, and we will put our horses to the trot, my love," said her father, in a low voice to Veronica; and then, having given his steed free head, he hallooed to the guide, to keep up with them, while he, and his child toiled along the broken, and dubious track, till the straggling stumps, and protruding roots of old trees again obliged them, to continue their journey, with a slackened pace, and a guarded rein. However, they breasted the fierce storm-gusts of wind, and drift, and splashed through the deep brooks, which beset their way, with dogged resolution,—the mind of Vicchy, infinitely more tortured, with fears for his child's health, than on account of his own personal sufferings, although they included some inward misgivings, as to the cause of his guide's prolonged separation. Presently, he mounted the little girl, on his own horse, before him, and, wrapping his cloak, so closely about her, as to shield her, in a great degree, from the relentless dashing of the rain ; he led her palfrey, with his left hand on the bridle, and thus held on his way.

"Would you have rest, and shelter, for yourselves, and weary beasts?" demanded some one, suddenly, in a rough, and peculiar tone of voice, which sounded distinctly, within arm's length of their horses' heads.

Vicchy started in his saddle, and, turning his eyes, hastily, in the direction of the speaker, could discern, (though nearly lost in shapeless darkness,) a tall figure, walking by the side of the animal, on which Veronica had ridden, and, at the same moment, he felt a strong hand laid, upon the bridle. The voice he recognised for the same, which, an hour before, had returned so evasive an answer to his inquiry. "I thought, you told me erewhiles, you were a stranger in these parts," observed Vicchy.

" You have an ear, I wis, sir traveller," returned the other : " I have subsequently been directed, to a sort of manse hereabouts; and if you, or your little one there, would prefer fire, food, and shelter, to cold, hunger, and a watery exit, you will, doubtless, yede ye wi' me."

The man ceased, and walked on, apparently awaiting the answer of Vicchy, who, for a minute, revolved the matter over, in his mind. He could not but marvel, how a pedestrian, and one too, who professed to have no local knowledge of the country, had contrived, for the last hour, in the teeth of obstacles, which might seem insuperable, to keep up with himself, and child, notwithstanding their superior facilities, for passing over the ground ; and, if the difficulty of thefeat staggered him, his suspicions were no less aroused, as to the motive, which prompted the stranger to surmount it. He half feared,—as he recollect ed, that he had companions, at the time, he first accosted him,—that he was in the power of banditti. His first impression, therefore, was to decline accompanying the fellow ; but, the next instant, the storm reburst in full violence, and the idea of his child being forced to abide its brunt, crossed his mind, with a pang, that determined him, to risk accepting the man's proposal. Suppressing, therefore, as far as he might, any appearance of apprehension, he presently said ; " My good friend, thine offer is fair, and we will e'en wend our way with thee."

" Now, by my troth," returned the other, " from the time you took to consider, it seemed to me, that you had your private reasons, for notrecking the deluge of this mirksome night. Some folks," he added, placing his hand, on the long mane* of the palfrey, and lightly

* In the time of our story, the tails and manes of Hungarian horses, were let to grow as nature meant them, and were not docked, and " trimly dressed " as now-a-days. See Brown's Travels in Dacia, Styria, &c. London, 4to., 1688.

vaulting into the seat, which Veronica had lately filled : “some folks, I trow, never die of hydrophobia.”

“Free and easy !” thought Vicchy, as, reining back his horse, he turned his head, to look after the follower, who had the care of his wealth, and baggage ; but, only six yards off, all things were wrapt in darkness, and, resuming his course, Vicchy involuntarily heaved an apprehensive groan.

“By the mass !” said his officious companion, “though I’m wrong to make an oath upon it, the sight of your late guide, or his beast, is past an ave, on that you may take my troth, an you will.”

Vicchy would not condescend to demand an explanation ; but his fears, respecting his property, became intolerable, and he pursued his slow, and toilsome way, in a state of mental agitation, which we will not essay to describe.

In a short time, having deflected a little from the road, into a narrow bridle-path, a sudden turn brought the party, in front of a large quadrangular edifice. The imperfect light hardly admitted of Vicchy’s distinguishing even a part of the outline of the building, which, however, he judged to be vast, and dreary. It was massively built, and, like every other fortified mansion of the country,* encompassed with a deep moat. Embosomed amid huge trees, on the verge of a vast forest, it lay ensconced, apparently guarded from casual discovery, by the tangled difficulty of its access. Their pseudo guide soon alighted, opposite the immense wide portals, before which the drawbridge was raised up. Here, he applied to his mouth a horn, chained to a large stone pillar, and blew a loud blast. Presently a voice demanded, what they wanted. Their conductor took on himself the task of explanation.

* Comme toutes les autres for teresses du pays entouree d’un grand fosse fort large et qui forme une petite riviere. Mem. du Comte Bettlem. Niklos.

“Three benighted travellers,” he replied : “my master and his child, and myself, their guide, crave shelter for the inclemency of the weather.”

A brief period of anxiety, to Vicchy, followed, which was determined by the slow lowering of the rattling drawbridge. This (the unknown assuming the lead,) they crossed on horseback ; when, almost immediately, the loud groaning of the laden windlasses, announced, that the bridge was again being uplifted. And now, torches glared around our travellers, who, after dismounting, were ushered through a heavy gateway, into a large, low-roofed apartment, where a “liveried army” of menials, in a double line, awaited them. Her father, who had assisted Veronica out of the saddle, and still retained her, in his arms, well nigh dropped the child, to the ground, as his eyes lit on the person of his mysterious conductor, which the torch-light gave to view. For a moment, he deemed he looked, indeed, upon the very guide, who had accompanied him, from Warsaw. The habit, which was after a peculiar fashion, Vicchy recalled, to the minutest particular, and, though he could not account for the metamorphosis, a dreadful suspicion, almost amounting to conviction, crept over him, that it was the identical garb, worn, by his absent follower. The physiognomy, however, of this man, was evidently of a different cast, although an immense black patch, which hood-winked one eye, and deformed half the visage, together with the long flaxen hair, streaming, in thick profusion, over the forehead, and bushy eye-brows, made it difficult, to distinguish the exact lineaments of a countenance so strangely disfigured, and disguised. As Vicchy gazed, in horrified amazement, he observed the stranger take, from the pocket of his outward vest, a green scarf, and carelessly wrap it round the arm, near his right elbow, to cover certain sanguine gouts, which discoloured the sleeve.

“Certes, that was an ugly fall, honourable master, on

the descent of the bridge yonder," said the man, addressing himself to Vicchy, " but for the intervention of St. John Nepamacene,* you had lost a guide whose value—but, perdy, that were better left for others to tell of, only, I trow, you might not readily have found a substitute."

" You bleed ; are you much hurt, friend ?" inquired one of the swarm of lacqueys, who flocked around the party.

" Not to signify,—a graze of the skin,—thank you, and God be praised ! I am no chicken ;" responded the stranger ; " no bones broken,—only a bruise, sir ; yet who would think of as thorough-paced a garron,* I assure you, as any on the roads, serving one such a jade's trick ? A stumble, sir, a stumble ; but, gramercie ! the saint was standing by at the time, do ye see ; so I shall survive this bout."

Vicchy's immediate impulse was to denounce the villain ; but the consummate effrontery, his conduct exhibited, so oppressed, and, as it were, overawed the magnat, that he felt disinclined, to proceed to that extremity. While he hesitated how to act, an old domestic, of grave and formal deportment, entered the vestibule, and scanned our belated travellers, with an eye of minute observation. He came to announce, that Count Rodna, the proprietor of the mansion, would be happy to receive the gentleman, and his daughter. Vicchy, retaining Veronica by the hand, prepared to accompany the solemn seneschal, for such was the man's office,—when a word, lowly spoken in his ear, caused him to start, and turn his head.

" Eissenburg !" whispered the fearful individual, who had conducted him to the house, and who now seized his arm, as he was about to pass, through the door of the

* The tutelary statue of this saint is very generally placed near bridges, he having been thrown over the bridge, at Prague.

† Garron,—hack.

apartment: “Eissenburg! Outlaw!—I penetrate your disguise; breathe a syllable that may harm me, and, by immortal vengeance! the crow shall batten on thy stiffening corse, from the highest gibbet, in the city of Coloswar, ere to-morrow’s sun set. But keep a close tongue in your head, sir duke, and I, on my part, will lock thy secret, where only the Mano, and myself are like to find it.” Having thus spoken, the man turned on his heel; and Vicchy, at once surprised, indignant, and alarmed, hastened, with his daughter, after the functionary.

The ideas, which filled the head of the miscreant, who tarried behind, were much to the following purpose:—

“So I have cowed our high constable,—there’s nothing sooner transmutes a man of metal to a coward, than the thought of these young brats, with their milk-white faces! How I scared his dukeship, with his own man’s livery!—my ‘aviour overpowered him!—Ha! I have seldom found it fail me: let me see;—this Vicchy is, evidently, a feeble-minded lord, and so men report him; and now, or I greatly err, the lord’s a *betyar*,*—a *betyar*—so—and who ever heard speak of a beggar chaf-fering, when gold was to be got at? Every man, I opine, hath his purchase; and be he poor, his conscience is less costly; besides, I have but to say the word, and, he knows, his life is forfeited. All things considered, he’ll scarce sleep to-night—how, if I sound him? For Pereny, and that boy,—they shall, they must be murdered! My visit here, shall not be for nought;—but Wurmser’s mis-adventure was ill-timed; I could have better spared him, after the deed. To decapitate son, as well as father, and make away with their heads, undetected and unharmed, through the various hindrances of the barricadoed dwelling, and that without assistance, would seem hardly feasible. This Herezeg† is a proper person for my purpose; and him, my good genius hath sent me, at

* Pauvre diable.

† Duke.

a pinch. I have only to superintend, and regulate, the first paroxysms of his consternation, and despair, and, peradventure, I may render both subservient to the accomplishment of the emperor's mandate. If, while I speed Peter Pereny to his long, last reckoning, I could but induce this weak nobleman, for love,—no, that will never do,—well, lucre,—or, egad ! out of downright terror, to puff out the light of the young whelp,—his duplicate, the affair might be compassed without noise, or risk, on my part : it is not unlikely ;—I'll try for it, at all events.” The train of his thoughts was interrupted, by the entrance of several of the household : “ So, here are those,” he muttered to himself, “ who must instruct me in the ‘ whereabouts,’ of this vast chateau ;” and the rascal immediately addressed himself to the busy menials, who were spreading the table, with dried caviare, vegetables, and fruit, in the Christian spirit of compromise, significant of catholic hospitality, on a fast-day.

Let us return to Vicchy, who, with his child, emerged again into the sweeping blast, and was marshalled, by the solemn functionary aforesaid, across an open area, or plot of grass, to a massive door, which gave access to the main body of the building. Thence they were introduced, through a spacious ante-room, into the presence of the venerable proprietor of the mansion.

At the upper end of a large, and handsome apartment, the folding doors of which were thrown open, to receive Vicchy, and his daughter, was seated Count Rodna, who rose on their entrance, and, with reserved, though stately courtesy, advanced a few steps, to meet our travellers. With that undefinable, and unconstrained air, that *manière d'être*, which decisive, and conscious worth, or superiority of station, naturally induces, he begged to be informed, how he might best evince the sincerity of the welcome, he tendered ? After briefly returning thanks, Vicchy expressed an anxious wish, that his little girl should instantly retire, and divest herself of her dripping

clothes. Accordingly, Veronica was committed to the motherly care of a female domestic, and, under her auspices, withdrew. Vicchy, his parental feelings being thus relieved, proceeded to examine, with a degree of wonder, deepened by involuntary respect, the person of his ancient host. He seemed to have numbered at least as many years of life, as the two wisest of men * have assigned, for the limit of human health, and vigour, at which climacteric, our spiritual horizon dilates itself before us, and whence the most hale, and strong are bid to contemplate, in a deepening perspective of decay, and imbecility, the brief remainder of their mortal tarriance, and the final close of a protracted pilgrimage. His habit was becoming, though not costly, and rather appeared under, than over, his rank, as lord of that mansion. A valuable turquoise ring might be discerned, on the middle finger of his right hand,—it was the only ornament, he wore. A cap, or bonnet, of green velvet, sat lightly on his head, which a few wintry hairs, the livery of age, could hardly be said to exempt from total baldness. His height rose scarcely above the middle standard, but it might be gathered, from the compactness of his figure, though slightly bent by years, that, in the prime of manhood, his person must have been peculiarly adapted for jousts, tournaments, and other athletic exercises of the tilt-yard. The whole cast of his form, and countenance, might have afforded an artist an admirable model, for the king of Pylos. An indescribable halo of majesty, distinguished his every step, and animated every gesture of his body. His very nature, however, mellowed, by the gentle influence of Time, or, it might be, subdued, by misfortune, appeared circumfused by that “divinity,” which, *in other days*, was thought to “hedge a king.”

There was, indeed, a something, which might well be termed regal, in the light of his full, hazel eye, chas-

* Solon and Solomon.

tened, as it was, by long abstinence from command, and worldly dignity, and softened, by his continued, and exemplary observance, of certain ascetic rites of the Romish church. So filled was the mind of Vicchy, with the impression of venerable grandeur, which the appearance of Count Rodna, unbowed, either by the weight of years, or luxurious indulgence, was ever sure to inspire, that it was not, till after some brief interval, that he took even a cursory view of the apartment, into which he had been ushered. The pannels, on every side, were framed of polished cedar wood, heavily, though highly, wrought. The lofty roof was rudely, and somewhat fantastically carved into ornament, which, radiating, from the centre of the ceiling, to the loaded cornices, became confounded with their elaborate sculpturings. A coat of plate-armour, and steel bonnet, corresponding to it; a dag, and two-handed sword, set with precious stones, contributed to relieve the gloomy splendour of the antique chimney-piece, over which they hung. A range of narrow cells or niches, each hallowed, by the image of some Romish saint, glittering in the impotency of paint, and tinsel, (the Lares of the Catholic church), had been skilfully carved, in the wooden entablature of the heavy mantel. Some half dozen iron cressets, branching from the wainscoat, at respective distances, lit up the chamber. Three deep narrow windows, enriched with emblazoned glass, were now draperied from view, whilst, before each arched recess, the voluminous curtains flung down, from their faded festoons, in many an ample fold, the long-suspended loopings, and fringes, which swept the inlaid floor.

The old gentleman shortly broke the silence, by saying, — “ You have incurred no inconvenience, I trust, sir, nor injury, from the effects of the storm, which a night’s good rest will not cause you to forget; indeed, if man knew his real interest, he would rather pray for these rubs, and temporary annoyances, than wish to be exempt

from them : they teach him to set a just value, on his own condition, and enhance, and give a zest to, those ordinary blessings, which, otherwise, grown common, are conceived, in the pride of possession, to be his inherent right, till his soul forgets to thank the Giver of all goodness."

Vicchy, who, immediately looked on his host, as a very saint-like personage, made a suitable reply ; and then he could not avoid intimating, how great was his anxiety, respecting the property, in gold pieces, and moveables, he had entrusted to the charge of his missing follower.

" On this score, I wis," answered Count Rodna, " you may set your mind at rest, sir merchant, (for such was the character, which Vicchy personated) our neighbourhood is, happily, seldom visited, by those marauding troopers, of the Bloody Peter, which, elsewhere, desolate the land ; and the bands of the Cyganis, with whom, truth to say, we are somewhat more troubled, have not been heard of, of late. Your servitor, I trow, will join you at Coloswar, so let not his absence occasion you uneasiness."

Vicchy, who called to mind the bloody garments of his guide, sported like a trophy, by that daring miscreant, to whose minatory language his ears yet rung, could not exactly reciprocate these anticipations ; but the terrible retaliation, which was in the villain's power, and which he had threatened to execute, should he be impeached, induced Vicchy, with whatever reluctance, to confine his apprehensions, for the present, to his own bosom.

Count Rodna, misapprehending the nature of his cogitation, after a short pause, resumed, " Nay, sir merchant," he said, and a quiet smile lighted his noble features, " we will, nathless, have the country scoured by daybreak, in search of intelligence ; but, prithee," he added, pointing to a sort of refection, which had been prepared, on a side table, " be seated, and partake of such poor cheer, as our buttery can supply."

"For myself," continued the hareshchina*, "I were loath to break my fast, on a day of mortification, more especially at this season, which I ever set apart to expiate, by bitter penance, fatal, and heinous sins, done, sir, in my days of pride, and thoughtlessness,—done — horrible remembrance!"— and the speaker's voice assumed a tone of deep, and solemn earnestness,—“in opposition to the express commands of Heaven, whose nuncio, the well-beloved of Jesus, came down, from on high, and, before the assembled congregation, reproached me, for my past transgressions, and warned me, to desist from the crime, I meditated. In the face of the nation, was I solemnly rebuked, and the heaviest malisons were invoked, as the penalty of my future disobedience! and, oh God! in the face of the world, by my vain glory, and sacrilegious daring, I reaped, and drew down on my head those anathemas, which timely humiliation, and repentance, might have averted, and since, an exile, as you see, have I, for eight-and-twenty years, bewailed, in sackcloth and ashes, my disregard of the apostle, and its direful consequence." He ceased, and crossing his arms meekly on his breast, appeared absorbed in thought, for a few moments: while Vicchy was too deeply impressed, with reverence for his host, to break the silence. It was not long, ere Count Rodna resumed, with more cheerfulness: "I have entered into these details, sir merchant, to account for my barren hospitality. I am sure, you will allow my peculiar obligations, to excuse my absence—but be seated;" and, with these words, the reverend personage withdrew.

Our traveller had small appetite for the *vesper-brod*,† provided for him, and shortly after, the seneschal, before-mentioned, attended, to show him his bed-chamber. After having ascended a blind, and winding staircase, the two passed along a corridor, off which, several doors, on

* Hareschina; head of the household.

† Supper.

either side, issued into different chambers. The wind, which had somehow found, or forced, a vent, at the extremity of the passage, rushed by, with such fitful violence, that the light, which was borne, by the domestic, who preceded Hubert, was now, wholly dulled, and anon, flared, with precarious brightness. Once, as the man paused, to shield the flickering taper, a tall figure, wrapped in the habit of a monk, and having an immense leaden crucifix, suspended from his girdle, suddenly passed by Vicchy, whose reverted eye was still pursuing the obscure shape, as it receded, like a spirit, into the darkness ; when a low, arched door, opening upon the gallery, slowly revolved, and a person, whom he conceived to be Count Rodna, reclosed it, though not, before he caught a glimpse of another individual, kneeling, in the posture of devotion, before a large picture of the Virgin Mary. The gusts of wind having died away, they again pressed forward, and presently reached the sleeping apartment, allotted to our traveller.

Left to himself, Vicchy immediately secured the door, so far as two strong bolts permitted, and proceeded to revolve over those events of the past day, which bore down his mind, with the most dismal forebodings. For awhile, he balanced in his thoughts, whether, if, in the course of the next morning, there were no tidings of his guide, he would not disclose to his host the presumptive proof, he thought, he possessed, of the stranger's guilt. Then the vengeance, which had been threatened recurred to him, and the vile calculation, on which the miscreant had acted, assured his safety ; as, of yore, the "*vitrea forma*" was wont to shield the hunter of the tigress ; * for the poignant idea of the helpless prospects of his child, were he to perish, "puzzled the will," and Hu-

* To avoid the rage of the tigress, says Pomponius Mela, the hunter would cast before him a mirror. The reflected image, being mistaken for her young, would distract the attention of the parent, *et sic ipse* (the hunter) *fugit*.

bert's strong resolution to obtain justice, "with this regard, lost the name of action." Presently, worn by the fighting of contrary emotions, our traveller addressed himself to his devotions, and afterwards, threw his wearied body, on the bed. The mental agitation, and bodily exertion, which had harassed, and wearied him, for so many hours, soon produced their usual effect, and the train of gloomy ideas, which haunted his mind, subsided in a perturbed repose.

On his re-appearance, next morning, Vicchy, was greeted, by Count Rodna, with a piece of intelligence, which, however he might have apprehended the event, severely afflicted him, owing to its cruel concomitancy, with the total destruction of his fortunes. Persons, who had been out, making inquiries respecting the missing follower of our travellers, had just returned, bearing with them two naked corpses of murdered men. Vicchy, unheedful of the monk, with a leaden cross, who sat near, bent in shuddering, and freezing conviction, over the bodies, and readily identified the person of one, for that of his guide. Count Rodna understood enough of the human heart, to know that grief is, more or less, a sacred thing, let it proceed from what cause it may ; so, in silence, he motioned to the monk, whose presence we before mentioned, and who, tightening his girdle of ropes about his loins, retired, with the venerable host. Supporting his elbows, on his knees, with his head bowed down, on his two hands, in a manner that shaded his face, sat the impoverished noble, locked in that attitude of quelled, and speechless dejection, which "whispers the o'erfraught heart, and bids it break." Verily, 'tis an easy thing to read, with indifference, of the misfortunes of our fellow-creatures, besides that, to be "steeped in poverty to the very lips," may not be contemplated, by the youthful enthusiast, in that hideous light, in which, a greater experience of the common thoroughfares of life, sooner or later, will instruct him how to regard it. From the spe-

culsive, and the young, the visitation of poverty, in the fulness of his power, may draw down little compassion on the sufferer; not that their hearts are incapable of sympathy, but because, from the accident of their position in society, they are, happily, incompetent to estimate the import of the term, or to comprehend its hard, and coarse significance. Knowledge, of whatsoever kind, is vague, and superficial until it be *felt*; until, according to the sublime tragedian, * it comes to us by suffering †: and the science of adversity, in all its bearings, can only be adequately appreciated by that man, who has himself gone through its degrading elements. “We must feel, if we would know.” May the gentle reader, who, perchance, revels in the wantonness of wealth, never experience those realities, whose horrid apprehension shot icicles, through the heart of Hubert! May he never graduate in a school, where the knowledge of mankind is the harsh, and miserable lesson to be conned! May the idea of poverty still associate itself, with classical, and heart-stirring recollections; such as the integrity of Fabricius, the patriotism of Cincinnatus, or the genius of Alfred—and may he never come into close contact, with its rending, and calamitous details! But really these *diverticula* ‡ will never do: let us return to our tale.

Suddenly, Vicchy felt the arms of some one clasp him round the neck, and, roused, by this intimation of *her* presence, for whose sake, he chiefly regretted, the utter bankruptcy of his means, he raised his head, and beheld Veronica, who had crept to his side, and who now looked up to him, with eyes, whose ethereal sapphire, the very soul of innocence seemed to inhabit. Parting her beautiful hair, on either side of her forehead, he held her from him, for a moment, as he perused, with parental fondness, the ten-

* Eschylus.

† ἐίκα ἔε τοῖς, μεν παθοῦσιν μαθεῖν επίρρέπει.—ΑΓΑΜ.

‡ A diverticulo repetatur fabula.—JUVENAL, Sat. xv. v. 72.

der, and heavenly expression of the damsel's countenance. Her eyes, upturned, glistened with sensibility, and Vicchy, drawing her fairy form nearer to him, kissed away their moisture, and then, pressing her convulsively to his breast, nature no longer stood rebuked, but vindicated her soft prerogative. The presence of his child, her innocent endearments, smote him, even, like the wand of the holy messenger in the desert, loosening the hidden springs of feeling, and "he wept—he wept!" And oh! those moments of rapture, when the deep fountains of the sealed-up heart overflow their mounds. Ye know not—ye, who never, in the course of your lives, felt for another's woe, whose beam of prosperity, amidst the night of this evil world, hath never failed you—whose nature is encrusted under the forms, and habitudes of social selfishness—ye know not the luxury of such grief; else, would ye almost barter the insipid common-places of a state of existence, which shuts out all casualty, and woe, for the joys of vicissitude, and change, and quit the dull round of sated wishes, and palled desires, to taste those transports, "few and far between," which charm away adversity.

"Father, why do you weep, and turn away your face?" asked Veronica, as the tears coursed one another, down her own pale cheeks.

"My dear, henceforth we are pensioners on the casual charity of every passing stranger," sobbed the parent, directing towards her, a look of smothered agony; "every ducat, I had in the world, was rapt from me, in the storm last night."

"God's dispensations must be acquiesced in, father, you know; but never mind being poor, for if you will let me, I will beg for you, and labour for you, and were I a man, I'd fight for you; but, as it is, o' the long evenings, I will sing, and dance, and never doubt, we will be as merry as crickets, when you will see, how happy I can be in your smiles—if you will but smile—and how good a girl!"

Vicchy strained the youthful speaker to his heart—“ Bless you, love !” he said, in a voice of the keenest anguish, when the child resumed, more confidently—

“ A pin for being rich ! ’tis being good, makes the heart jovial, which is every thing we need care about. Were we an emperor, joy were all : and being wicked, the emperor tastes it not; so that you see, dear father, the sinful man, set off, with all the trim of his greatness, might well envy the virtuous pauper, though in rags—’tis just so, and you smile.”

The artless philosophy of his innocent child found its way to the heart of Vicchy ; he could not reply, but bent over her, in melting tenderness. Their tears flowed together, and perhaps those of the father were not altogether tears of sorrow. Somewhat tranquillized, by having yielded to this burst of natural emotion, they sat down to their melancholy meal, which, being discussed, Vicchy was left to his private meditations. “ Yes,” thought the fond father, as the door closed, on the obedient child, “ I am still rich in blessings, which outvalue all I’ve lost, while she is left me ! Heaven forefend that my evil destiny drag her along with it, to ruin ! ” A tear, he was unable to repress, stole from his eye, and he turned to the window.

The storm of the preceding evening seemed to have increased in violence—the high sounding winds whistled loudly, and mournfully, through the branches of the forest—the dark, red clouds enveloped the face of earth, whilst their sulphureous appearance served to indicate, that the tempest had not yet exhausted itself.

We should have mentioned, that a message had been conveyed from Count Rodna, during their repast, recommending Vicchy, and his daughter, not to think, for that day, of exposing themselves, to the rage of the weather.

Let us draw a veil over the early ebullition of Vicchy’s feelings, as he contemplated, in dim perspective, the horrible realities of the future. The state of his mind

found its apt prototype, in the elementary din, and clang, which, like an ancient chorus, or overture of an *opera seria* of some master hand, voiced a hollow, and responsive, cadence to the fatal, and mysterious drama, now unfolding, within that retired dwelling, and howled a funeral anthem, over the lost, and last child of the race of Eissenburg. So thought Vicchy, and he might have vented his bitter meditations in the words of Zanga—

“Rage on ye winds ! burst clouds ! and waters roar !
You bear a just resemblance of my fortune,
And suit the gloomy habit of my soul.”

As he stood at the casement, now gazing, unconsciously, at the continuous waterfall, from the eaves of the building, and now, shrinking, at the lightning, as it quivered between the boles, and dripping foliage of the forest ; he was startled to behold the figure of his sanguinary guide, emerge, from the shadow of the trees. The accomplished ruffian crossed the drawbridge, and, shortly after, glided, into the apartment. As the door, through which he passed, was behind Vicchy, and he trod, with a soft step, the notice of that unhappy man was solicited, by a slight tap, on the shoulder, ere he was aware of his approach. Vicchy recoiled involuntarily, as if an adder had stung him, but, recollecting himself, he endeavoured to suppress his natural feelings, whilst the other, without shifting his position, made a slight obeisance, and smiled derisively.

“Fellow,” demanded Vicchy; “How came you by those garments, which were my guide’s?”

“Egad, my lord duke, you owe me some thanks,” answered the man.

“Thanks, villain ! a halter rather,” returned Vicchy.

“That were an ungrateful acknowledgment, for having saved your life,” observed the stranger.

“Saved my life !” repeated Vicchy, contemptuously.

“Even so,” replied the other, taking from his pocket a slip of paper, which he unfolded, and read aloud. It appeared from this, and other documents, fallen into the

possession of the unknown, that the official, whose faith Vicchy had never distrusted, contemplated betraying the outlawed nobleman, as soon as he had trepanned him, by a pretended ignorance of his rank, into the city of Colos-war. That this man was a confidential agent of the autho-rities, was so clearly evidenced, as not to admit of a doubt. Thus, that very stroke, which had like to have stunned Vicchy, with its sudden infliction, proved a direct intervention of Providence, in his favour. Oh! ever may the pious mind observe, in the blow of adversity, however acute its momentary agony, if not a prominent, at least, a covert blessing ; and where we sometimes fail to reconcile the mysterious dispensations of Heaven, let us turn an eye of faith, on those chastisements, which may seem unmerited, remembering, that the object of our merciful Father, in taking from the Christian the world, is to give him, himself, and that his ways, concern the trappings and baubles of time, no farther, than these might work out, in joy or sorrow, our everlasting happiness.*

"However you meant the deed, I must needs own, you are entitled to my thanks," said Vicchy, when, at length, the extremity of his surprise, left him room for speech. "Fill up the measure of the obligation, and restore me the property, committed to the charge of him, whom, it seems, you have murdered and rifled."

The stranger laughed outright—"By Saint Nicholas ! that's a modest request ; and you prefer it with a face, as if it were conscionable. I cannot choose but laugh. Because I have reprieved your life, does it follow, that I am to return you my booty?"

"What you call your booty," answered Vicchy, some-what angrily, "consists of pieces of gold, and certain moveables, which are mine, do you see,—my property, friend, and"—

* La religion est la fin de tous les desseins de Dieu sur la terre.—
MASSILLON.

"Not so fast, my good lord," interrupted the other. "In the present condition of Erdély, there is a sort of general scramble, during which, men will not wait the sanction of a legal sentence, to seize, what they can lay their hands on. Your property that was, is become mine, by the right of conquest; were the laws enforced, yours, it might scarcely be, pending your outlawry; 'tis mine, or the state's, at all events."

Vicchy groaned audibly.

"Nevertheless," proceeded the man, "I am of a pitiful disposition, and will do that, which, you may take your oath, the government never would. I will give you back your property, without the mulct of so much, as a single hongree!" The eyes of Vicchy sparkled, with thankfulness, and surprise. "I will," concluded the stranger — "I will, by G—d!"

"That hath a better sound," began Vicchy; "though, indeed, I can never sufficiently testify ——" He hesitated, and the other seized the moment, to break in.

"Don't be too sure of that, my lord duke," he said; "there is a trifling boon that, in return, I'd ask of you, which, I flatter myself, you will not think of refusing."

"Name it," said Vicchy, "and, if it be within compass of possibility, and the competence of a nobleman, and a good catholic, you may command me."

"Um!" ejaculated the stranger, looking cautiously around him, as he drew, from the innermost folds of his vest, a roll of parchment, which appeared to be closely written over, on one side. The stranger held the broad sheet before him, and, after casting a jealous glance around, was about to read it aloud, when a forked stream of lightning, darting by the window, dimmed his vision. Vicchy shrunk from the lurid flame, whilst the other smiled disdainfully. Again, in a brief second of time, another fierce, and sulphuric flash enveloped earth, and heaven, smashing, into shivers, the gorgeous, and emblazoned panes, that filled the compartments of the case-

ment, within whose deep recess they were stationed. The volley of thunder, that directly reverberated along the heavens, shook the building, from its pinnacle to its very basement. A bolt had fallen. Vicchy lay stretched on the ground, while his lip faintly muttered a pater-noster. The weighty armour, suspended over the mantelpiece, was loosened, and fell to the pavement, with a tremendous clash, and the murderer himself was brought down, to the posture of prayer, with his one hand pressed against his forehead, the other, clasping the parchment, he had instinctively thrust, within the bosom of his dress. If his aim was to preserve the instrument, he must have been too slow, or the lightning was too instantaneous, for, the next minute, he started to his feet, and drew forth his hand; — his eyes rolled from the empty palm to the floor, where lay the blasted remnant of the parchment, scorched,—shriveled to a cinder. It was at that moment that Veronica rushed forward, and threw herself into her father's arms, as he slowly arose from the ground. Amongst others, who, at the same time, crowded into the room, was the venerable Count Rodna, who, raising the long spear from the ground, regarded it with a mournful aspect.

“ Fell was the dint, which laid thee low, my brave sword! Donald,” he added, addressing the seneschal, “ bid some one replace these mailed pieces.” Then, turning to Vicchy, he said, “ My experience hath been long and various, sir merchant, but it may not parallel an hour like this; never, in my memory, did the wrathful skies so loudly vent their thunder. Trust me, some blot, some foulness in creation, needs cleansing; yes, there is a cause.”

“ What cause?” said Vicchy, who, occupied with his daughter, was hardly aware he spoke.

“ Crime, sir, crime, that should be searched, and rooted out,” returned Count Rodna, with solemn dignity of aspect; — and now, the visiting blasts of Heaven are dealing with it; else, why these horrors?”

The murderer here half-audibly interposed his opinion. "If I might presume to speak," he said, "I should guess, the old gentleman must know best, since perdy, the ground we tread's his own."

Count Rodna looked at the man, with some surprise, but shortly moved away, to address himself to a tall, majestic-looking person, who, evidently, from his superior habit, and commanding presence, formed no part of the hospitable foreigner's establishment. He, we speak of, stood, for a while, in the doorway, surveying, with searching eye, and reserved mien, the characteristic group, whom the general terror had collected together. He now advanced a few steps, into the centre of the apartment, to meet Count Rodna. There was something *distingué* in the manner of this individual, which was calculated, in no ordinary degree, to arrest, and concentrate all the attention of the beholder. Since his character, and fortunes, will be found to be connected with the mysteries of our story, we must here take leave, in order to clear the subsequent transactions, to describe, as succinctly, as is in our power, his form, and features. We should apologize, however, to the rest of the company, and assembled household, for leaving them transfixed in their several attitudes, and occupations, as if by the horn of Oberon.

The personage, in question, was, at the time our story introduces him, of middle age. His dress might well have been worn, by the proudest aristocrat in Hungary; but the wearer became it, with such dignified ease, as if his vestments were beneath his consideration. The cast of his countenance owned an assumption of lofty superiority, and was indicative of an unbending, and overbearing disposition, still its expression hardly denoted a bad heart. He was of majestic height, and his port was lordly, and commanding. Every motion, however unconstrained, bespoke his sense of personal importance. A warrior's, and a statesman's experience, dwelt on the expression of his forehead. His eye, however, gleamed with a wandering, and unsettled light, expressive of an instable, and vacil-

lating character. On his brow, at the moment, there was a cast of anxiety; and his lips were compressed, as in thought.

“ His gathered brow and lips,
Wreathed by long scorn, did only sneer, and frown,
With hue like that, when some great painter dips
His pencil in the gloom of earthquake and eclipse.” *

We will detain the narrative no longer. The murderer approached near, and nearer, to where Vicchy was hanging over his child, till he stood beside that nobleman, when seizing his arm, he spake, in a low, though piercing tone. “ Do you know that man?” he inquired.

“ Know whom?” demanded Vicchy. The other guardedly cast a look towards the centre of the room. Vicchy followed slowly, with his eyes, the furtive, but withering glance of the unknown, till they fell upon the person, with whom Count Rodna had been conversing. As they finally settled there, in a steady gaze, his countenance lighted up,—with recognition. He saw the same man, of whom, the preceding night, he had caught a glimpse, at prayer. Regarding him now, however, with more attention, Vicchy recoiled apace, as he recollect ed that the memorable occasion, on which he had last been in his company, was, when the Princess Beatrice, in the august presence of the ambassador of Solyman, and the magnats of Hungary, had solemnly accepted the noble for her affianced husband.

“ Know him! ay, surely; he is Peter Pereny,” answered Vicchy, at the same time falling back, towards the window.

“ The very individual, whose bride you made away with,” dryly rejoined the other, still at his elbow.

“ Liar!” hotly ejaculated Vicchy. The loud tone attracted the ears of some present; but the strange, and daring character, who had called forth the epithet, had already glided, amongst an adjacent party, who were busily engaged, raising the cumbrous armour to its former station. Beholding none within the deep embrasure, but

* Shelley.

the father and child, they, who were startled by the exclamation, probably imagined they had misapprehended what had been spoken, for the room became soon cleared of all, save Vicchy, Veronica, and that man, who seemed resolved to link some dreadful purpose of his own, with the interests of Eissenburg.

Again approaching the fated nobleman, “ My lord,” he said, “ I pass over that ugly word, you cast on me erewhiles, in respect that you know me not. See here,” continued the ruffian, as he stooped, and raised, in his hands, the blasted dust of parchment—“ What sorry spite of Heaven!—But I tell ye,” he continued, raising his eyes, and exalting his voice; “ Ye! who wield the thunder! that the virgin bays of courage shall withstand, and laugh to scorn, your danger; and the behests, and fierce pursuit of crowned heads, shall yet be execute, though ye threap ever so stoutly!—Lord constable,” proceeded the man, addressing himself to Vicchy, who, with horrified astonishment, regarded him; “ unto that indenture, which the silly lightning, as you see, hath incinerated to nothingness, was attached the royal seals and autography of two crowned, and reigning sovereigns, offering a vast reward, in case of certain services being rendered, which were therein stipulated.”

“ But what have I to do,” broke in Vicchy, “ with this parchment, or its contents ?”

“ You shall hear,” returned the ruffian: “ Listen to me. Many are the tongues, into which that proclamation hath been translated; and few the European states, whither it hath not penetrated; yet, neither the feudal tyrants of Germany, and of Spain, *SAVE TWO*, nor the millions of their vassals, ever heard of its existence; but the knowledge of its purport, rolls surely, and secretly, like an under-current, beneath the surface of society, and, despite the elements, would continue to circulate amongst that class unto whom it is directed, did not one of such, this very night, work its predestined will.”

“ What class?” inquired Vicchy, with a displeased

look, but faltering tone, whilst Veronica's cheek grew pale, as she clung closer to her father's knee.

"Such as I was born, and as thou art become, from circumstances," answered the other, with a grim smile of portentous meaning. Vicchy started, and the ruffian thus proceeded:—"The bandit, the murderer, the outlaw,—men, my lord duke, who are the Arabs of civilized society,—the *condottieri* of Europe! In the Wallachian tents, and the Cyganis' cave, a duplicate of that royal indenture, will be seen posted up,—nailed to the mast of every corsair's galley, it may be read, and let any magnat, between Calpè's cliff, and the flat margin of the Baltic, brave the offended laws, and hold out against the Lord's anointed, and that shrunken warranty shall be met with, on the rebel's festive board, ere the news be a week old. I tell thee, Herezeg of Eissenburg, that, now-a-days, the perusal of that same bit of parchment, is the initiatory rite of half the villains in Christendom." Veronica shook,—a curdling shudder crept through her frame. The damp hand she held, clipped in both hers, she strained convulsively to her lips, whilst her earnest eyes, upturned, watched, with anxious look, the effect of the ruffian's language on her father's countenance.

"Why this, to me?" demanded Vicchy, at last, with an intonation of voice, which he meant should express his indignation, but which, the consciousness of how much, in every way, he was in the villain's power, considerably softened.

"Because thou art of us," was the daring replication.

"How, man?" breathed, rather than exclaimed, the magnat.

"Lord constable, that wert, erewhiles," rejoined the other, with solemn voice; "you would do well to remember, that thy shield is battered, pierced, and that thy shrouded ancestry, will start at the trump of doom, ere thou, or thy child, or her children, shall ever rouse them at the herald's call, beneath those centuried, and erst stainless ensigns, which were handed down for thine in

heritance. Art not outlawed, sir?" Vicchy clasped both hands on his face, and dashing, from the feeble hold of Veronica, who had clung to him, in intense anxiety, hurriedly paced up and down the chamber. The tempter smiled.

"Nay, I'd have revenge, were I as you; but now, I would fain give you back your riches," observed the man. Vicchy's hands fell,—his march ceased, and he raised his eyes to the insidious speaker, who thus proceeded:—"Come, shall I conduct you to the spot, where I have secreted your treasures?"

"Whither?" inquired Vicchy.

"Some two miles hence," answered the other; "come, an your gold be sterling. I can show you, there, another of these royal proclamations. 'Tis not in the vernacular tongue, though, but writ in choice Cygani, which I will interpret." While the man thus spoke, Vicchy, in some degree, recovered his composure.

"Do you consider the state of the weather?" he objected, irresolutely.

"Good, my lord, I sow no danger in my promises," coolly returned the stranger; "if your mules, horse, and valuables, be not worth a drenching, I have done. I offered fairly."

"Man, I will accompany thee," cried Vicchy, after a minute's consideration.

"Thou wilt not," quickly interposed Veronica, catching her breath, and turning pale, while a sudden tear started to her eye; "indeed thou wilt, thou must not, father,—he means mischief." The murderer, for the first time, deigned a glance at the child, and then caressing her head with his hand, addressed her, in a gentle voice.

"Here, sweetheart," he said, "is a good book, and costly, graced with the name of Veronica, which I found tied to your horse's saddle. Is't thine, my *rozsám*?* If thou canst read it, 'twill edify thee in our absence;"

* Rosebud.

and, having handed her the volume, the man withdrew, beckoning to Vicchy, that he should follow.

"Be still, my little heart, I shall be back in an hour," said the lost noble, with a convulsive attempt to smile, and imprinting a kiss on the forehead of his child.

"Oh, remain where you are!" Veronica exclaimed, with a faint shriek; "the enterprise in which you would engage may be unholy." She looked up—her father had quitted the room; she walked to the window to watch his receding form, till the dark colours of his capote became blended with the deepening shadows of the wood, and then, as she sunk on her knees, a nameless, and chill presentiment crept to her heart.

It was in the midst of grief, and terror, the cause of whose vague excess, she could hardly explain to herself, that the book she had continued, unconsciously, holding in her hand, flew open, and her eye lit on these words,— "Come unto me, all ye that are heavy-laden, and I will refresh ye." Young as Veronica was, she had been instructed to peruse that holy testament, with the like single-minded, and undoubting faith, whlich, immortalized upon earth, and sanctified unto Heaven, those undaunted apostles of the Reformation, who, in that age, raised their protesting outcry, against the splendid idolatry of the see of Rome; and who, at the stake, sealed their belief, in the sufficiency of Jesus's Gospel to salvation; showing up to an ignorant, astonished world, side by side, the "false Florizel," and her antitype, and intrepidly arraigning the papal church, almost in the words of Hamlet to his mother —

"Look here upon this picture, and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers :
See what a grace was seated on his brow,
This *was* your husband — look you now what follows :
Here *is* your husband — like a mildewed ear
Blasting his wholesome brother — have you eyes ?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed
And batten on this moor ?"

The important privilege of searching the Scriptures was necessarily vindicated, by the very act of separating from the Roman Catholic community. To the exercise of private judgment, every one, according to the fundamental doctrine of the Reformation, owned an inherent title. But, however incontrovertible in the abstract, this asserted right does not appear to have wrought unmixed benefit to Christianity. From hence have sprung up, in every direction, a vile spawn of sectaries, who, distorting the texts, and warping the tenets of holy writ, would accommodate God's word to their own crude, conceited, and even blasphemous opinions — “ Chacun s'est fait à soi-même un tribunal où il s'est rendu l'arbitre de sa croyance.”*

This persuasion of each individual being both qualified, and entitled to judge for himself, in points of faith, caused the Scriptures, about this period, to be examined, in a fanatical spirit, with a view, either of having pre-conceived dogmas confirmed, or adopting a new creed, instead of their being taken up in that humble frame of mind, which were more rational, and becoming. Not unfrequently, they were resorted to for the superstitious purpose of ascertaining, from the passages which came uppermost, the line of conduct approved by Heaven, in cases of doubt, emergency, or tribulation ; and, in some such mood and temper, our little maiden hied, with devout mien, and composed step, to the privacy of her bed-chamber.

Vicchy, towards evening, returned, alone, from his unwitnessed interview. His daughter, whose ears had long thirsted for the well-known footsteps, flew to welcome him ; but he repelled her affectionate caresses, with coldness, if not with displeasure. A withering chill came over the spirit of the little girl, as, stifling the choking sob, and checking the rising tear, she silently turned away. Oh ! there is no sting of disappointment,

* Bossuet.

treachery, ingratitude, and hopeless love—afflictions which shadow the remote perspective of a child's subsequent existence,—that will bear comparison with the stab, that strikes home to his young heart, when its affectionate transports experience that freezing rebuff, ordinary to the thoughtless, and chartered tyranny of his elders. 'Tis as if drops of frost, each sharper than the sharpest lancet, drizzled over every atom of the naked frame. The antidote against the calamities of riper years, may be found in pride, in religion, in the inborn consciousness of rectitude; but the outraged feeling, the repressed solicitude, the crushed affections of the child, can have no such orvietan: again, and again, his passionate thoughts will revert, with suicidal aim, to the poignant remembrance; like the scorpion, that turns upon its own breast, the instrument, that was meant for a protection. Veronica gazed on her father, and instantly discovered, he was no longer the same man—his eyes were glazed—his features haggard, and care-worn—his cheek bloodless—he looked a walking corpse, rather than a living creature. A second time, Veronica, tremblingly approached him, only to encounter a still sharper repulse. "Ah!" thought the wretched girl, in the simplicity of her innocence; "God always hardens the heart of such as sort with wicked men, even, as we read, 'he hardened the heart of Pharaoh,' and this must be what the inspired page referred to. Alas! that naughty villain, who seduced my father—away with him!—would, please God! he had never been born."

Was this, an ominous foreshadowing on that child's soul, of the unknown's influence on her destiny? Was it an unconscious augury? Could she, indeed, have looked into the bosom of time, what bitter excuse would she have there discerned, for that uncharitable, and prophetic aspiration! *Id fatis videbatur!*

Darkness came on; and the tempest, which had not ceased during the entire day, seemed now to summon its whole collected force,—and that was terrible. Out of

the storm-cloud's bosom the gale sobbed, and the frequent, and vivid lightning flashed, whilst, ever and anon, the thunder spake with an emphasis, as if to astound, both earth, and heaven. A fire had been kindled in one of the smaller chambers, and the bright and crackling faggots, were no unwelcome auxiliary ; combined with the old tapestry, that hung around, and the thick drapery of the doors and windows, they threw over the feelings, that consciousness of comfortable seclusion, to which the insular situation of the chateau, and the rough elements without, imparted an additional charm, by the help of contrast : —

“ Grato cum sibilat igni
Molle pyrum ————— et malus austre
Miscet, cuncta foris, et de super intonat ulmo.” *

Here the proprietor of the mansion was seated on a large leathern chair, in the ample, cavernous chimney-corner, listlessly gazing, where the flame flickered brightly against the opposite wainscoat. At a short interval, behind his master, stood, in a respectful, and grave posture, Donald, the ancient domestic. At a greater distance, other menials had respectively stationed themselves, in various easy, or constrained attitudes, according as chance dictated, or custom authorized. On a bench, at a far corner of the room, Vicchy ensconced himself, in dejected meditation. His abstracted mien, his wild, and haggard countenance, in spite of all the artifice of self-command, would have betrayed the agitation, and the disorder of his mind, had he not contrived, in a great measure, to bury his features, in the folds of his attire. Veronica rested on a low tripod, close by, at her father's feet.

There was another individual, in that room, unto whom it is likely, the reader may desire an introduction, after being told, that Vicchy, ever and anon, bent on him, askaunt, a mysterious and boding look. He, to

* Milton.

whom we allude, was an eminently handsome lad, in the first glow, and buoyancy of existence, having curly hair, full, sparkling, blue eyes, lit with intelligence, and betokening a noble purpose, and a heroic spirit; uncommonly fine teeth, regular features, and olive complexion. He was tall for his years, and the expansion of his chest, and the agile symmetry of his make, were exhibited to advantage, beneath the close vest and tunic of blue velvet, cinctured, by means of a crimson sash, tight to the waist. This lad was commonly styled Sir Sigismund, by the retainers of that chateau, though what was his parentage or birth, remained a mystery. He now lay basking on the floor, in the blaze of firelight, having an immense folio displayed before him, with whose highly illuminated page he seemed intently occupied; not but that, often, for consecutive minutes, he would raise his eyes, and fix them, with a thoughtful tenderness, beyond his years, upon the crackling *krumholz*,* which presented ten thousand varieties of landscapes, and histrionic marvels, or whatever else, the poetic feeling of the moment, made up of reverie and sensation, might please to conceive or conjure—

“ And oft before his youthful eyes would run,
Such forms as glitter in the Muse’s ray.” †

For the space of an hour, not a word had passed the lips of any in this apartment, and all had remained nearly stationary, in the respective attitudes, and under the influence of those feelings, we have just described.

At length, Count Rodna broke the protracted silence. “ Methinks,” he said, doffing his outer vest, and casting the robe on the back of his seat, “ methinks these blazing brands remind one of an officious jester, I have heard tell of, whose wit was admirable in itself, but usually ill-timed. An unseasonable blessing is as little estimated, as the worth of one, fallen from his original estate, whose

* Knee-wood.

† Gray.

breeding is not merely misinterpreted, but, being viewed through an exclusive, and prejudiced medium, positively contemned."

Donald sighed audibly; whilst Sigismund, lifting his eyes from off the page, observed ; " It is not always so—a gem, however poorly set, sparkles the same; and there are, who can discern, and respect, whatever is beautiful, and grand, even under any peculiarity, or eclipse of external circumstances. By the way, would you, dear sir, deign to answer a question, I have long thought of putting, and had done, only that the fear of giving offence bridled my tongue ?"

" You may not be denied, my boy," replied Count Rodna, gazing on Sigismund, with a quiet approving smile. " Put an hundred an thou wilt. Propose it."

" That belt, sir!"—and the lad timidly indicated an immense iron belt, which met, and returned the blaze of the firelight, and which, on Count Rodna's throwing aside his exterior vest, was discovered to circle his waist. The venerable man seemed stung by the interrogatory, into recollection. A slight colour gleamed across his majestic countenance, the whole expression of which, assumed a melancholy character.

" This belt, my dear boy," faintly dropped from his lips.

" If you please—that is, if it be a fair inquiry, I would gladly learn why you invariably, in winter and summer, wear that cumbrous zone? No common cause can have induced you, at your advanced period of life, to submit to so terrible a penance." .

" It was no common cause," said Count Rodna, solemnly, and in a tone more firm than before. He stopped for an instant and then proceeded. " For more than half a century, has this iron belt girded me round, and unto it every year, I add a certain additional weight, in memory of one, to whose violent death I was in some sort accessory.

" A stranger?" demanded Sigismund, in a low tone.

"It was my father," replied Count Rodna. "In viewing this belt," he presently added, "you behold my self-inflicted punishment."

The youthful querist listened with rooted attention, whilst his eyes bespoke the deep interest he felt, in the relation of Count Rodna, and his commiseration for the penitent old man; but he did not speak, while the noble Scot shortly resumed—"and yet, it was not parricide," he said,—"no!—these hands never shed blood except in battle-field—but"—he was here interrupted by a deep, and hollow groan:—they started. Veronica passed, with dextrous quickness, between her father, and the general gaze, to conceal his pale, and agonized expression of countenance. It was from him the melancholy sound issued.

"Are you ill, sir?" inquired one of the troop of menials, standing near to Vicchy, who, raising his head, was in the act of rendering some brief, and probably, evasive answer, when, at that moment, a loud blast, emitted from the bugle hanging without the fossé, resounded through the ancient dwelling, and aroused every inhabitant within its walls.

And now the storm seemed to rage abroad, with greater violence than ever, and the artillery of Heaven rolled such a dreadful volley through the skies, as to threaten that the building would topple, on the heads of the inmates. Presently, one or two rushed into the apartments, with pale visages, and hair on end, followed by the affrighted janitor, who, in broken and inarticulate speech, gave his master to understand, that some strange person waited without, whose business he could not exactly ascertain.

"How so, man? Will he not tell his errand?" demanded Count Rodna.

"He cannot, I fear," answered the domestic; "his accents are too deep, and grave for life—they are unlike any thing human—and his figure, holy Mary save us!—such a figure!" and the man uplifted the whites of his eyes, and raised his hands on high, in which mute expressions of

horror, he was countenanced by those, who had preceded him, in his flight from the portal.

"Is Peter the Bloody upon us, that you look so terrified?" inquired Sir Sigismund, in a low tone, of one of these.

"'Tis the incarnate fiend himself," was the communication of the man to his fellows, delivered in a hoarse, breathless whisper. "I could not look upon him, without a palsy in every limb."

"Some traveller, doubtless, who requires shelter," mildly observed his lord. "Go you, Donald;" and Count Rodna ceased speaking; for again a summons, as loud and prolonged as the former, not only reverberated through the passages, and chambers of the vast edifice, but penetrated to the inmost heart of all who heard it.

The old domestic did not seem much to relish his mission; he turned horribly pale, but, at the same time, quickened his movements. During his absence, the countenance of every individual in the apartment, save one, reflected the superstitious terror, which was uppermost in their minds. Save one—the guide of Vicchy, who alone, of all that frightened company, appeared as if he felt small concern, in what was going on. His character had no tinge of that visionary superstition, which spread, in those days, a sort of thrilling interest, over the common places, and routine of life. With his eyes, watching the varying expression of Hubert's countenance, and his arms folded together, in composure, he stood, with apparent indifference, amid the group, untouched, in the remotest degree, by that magnetic virtue—sympathy. It was not long, ere Donald re-entered the room, still paler than he quitted it. A bewildered expression of mingled horror and amazement had settled on his brow, and he appeared considerably agitated. Having come up to his master, his quivering lips refused to form the words, which he attempted to utter, in an under tone, and it was with difficulty, he made himself understood.

"How so?" replied Count Rodna, in a more audible key—"he *will* speak with me, say you?... Was this

message, a message of command to me ? Ha ! to *me*, Donald ?”

“ Not altogether a command ; yet his mode of speech, methought, was horribly menacing,” answered the other.

“ Is he benighted ? If so, open wide our gates to him, and we will hear what he has to tell us.”

“ No,” returned Donald, “ his was not the voice of distress, nor the bidding of earthly power ; and, moreover, he declared, he would not cross the moat ; and, for the matter of that, God forbid, I say, that his cloven tread were on the sill of any Christian habitation !”

“ Why, Donald,” said the venerable Scot, raising himself from his seat, “ what contagious folly is here ? back ! and tell this presumptuous summoner, we will not parley with him, but, if he choose, he can instruct you with his purpose, or pray him to enter. On such a night one’s enemy’s dog should obtain shelter. Gracious Heavens ! there was a peal to wake the dead ! Obey me, Donald.”

The seneschal, with evident appearance of reluctance, which met an answering expression of sympathy, in the countenance of almost every one present, dragged himself out of the room. Count Rodna remained in a musing attitude, which none present cared to disturb. The silence of expectancy was over all, and the eager, horrified eyes, of every one in the room, were directed to the door, with feverish anxiety. Presently, the ancient follower, manifesting, if possible, still stronger symptoms of consternation, returned.

“ The being insists,—’tis his own word—on your appearing before him,” began the seneschal : “ he has that to unfold,” he says, “ which brooks neither other audience, nor delay : he summons you, by the token that ——” Donald’s voice faltered. He crept close beside to his venerable master, who, with considerable dignity, took up the word.

“ Speak out this invocation,” he said ; “ let us all hear !”—but Donald stooped his head, and whispered a few words, in his ear.

A slight flush suffused the complexion of Count Rodna, which was instantly succeeded, by a deadly paleness. Whatever were his thoughts, he made no reply ; but, on the moment, with a calm and resolved air, he rose, and deliberately withdrew, leaving, on the minds of all, as he closed the door after him, an anxious impression of indefinable awe. He proceeded straight to the outer court. The night was as black as ink ;—but Count Rodna had, with him, a torch, by the aid of whose light, might be faintly descried, on the opposite side of the moat, the gigantic shadow, whose imperative demand had brought him to the spot. He started back, and the torch, falling to the earth, was extinguished ; but, nerving himself for the encounter, he again prepared to direct his eyes, towards where the dusky summoner stood ! when, immediately, the heavy masses of cloud broke asunder, and one red, and fiery star struggled, through the lurid atmosphere. For the first time, that night, the beams of the moon pierced the drifting vapour, and shed a flood of mild lustre, on a little space of green expanse, surrounded by a border of brush, in the midst of which, rose the supernatural appearance. With what emotions of sublime, and thrilling curiosity, did Count Rodna gaze upon that stationary phantom ! He deemed, that he beheld, stretching itself before him, a kind of shadowy outline, of some vast, immane, and unformed spectre, and his whole frame was held in an attitude of solemn, and awe-struck contemplation.

“ In God’s name ! who, and what art thou ? ” he demanded, in a low and indrawn voice.

The amorphous phantasm, motioned forth its fleshless hand :—

“ Exile of Scotland ! ” he began, in accents horribly unearthly ; “ you behold the genius of Hungary : I am the same, who, on the eve of Mohacs, would have forewarned King Lewis of his fate, and so have averted the

catastrophe of that disastrous day. I am appointed, for a term, to watch over the destinies of this country, whose ruin is, this night, meant to be consummated, by the massacre of your guest."

"Massacre!—Guest!—Whom?" ejaculated Count Rodna, in a choked and trembling tone.

"The boy Sigismund," replied the phantom, "confided to your care, by Luke Swartz. He must inevitably perish, in cold blood, within these three hours, unless the deed be frustrated, by your changing the lad's dormitory, and hiding from every creature, even from himself, where he will lie this night. I adjure you, do this," proceeded the supernatural voice,—"I adjure you—

By him who fell unshrived, unblest,
Whose painful memory weighs thy breast!
By the malison of woe,
Launched on thy head at Linlithgow:
By the red ruin of Flodden rill,
I adjure thee, heed my will!"

As the undefined spectre concluded these last words, a blinding flash of lightning darted across the eyes of Count Rodna;—he closed them:—the rending of elements followed, and so loud and continuous was the sounding forth, that, one would have imagined, the arena of our planet, were substituted for the battling of fiends, in lieu of their native element of fire. At length, all was hushed. Count Rodna looked up. The gigantic vision had vanished, along with the moon's transient halo.

After having, privately, issued directions that, for that night, a translocation of the sleeping chambers of Sigismund and Veronica should be effected; Count Rodna slowly, and wrapt in thought, bent his footsteps to a remote part of the building. He paused, for an instant, before a door, and gently rapped at it. A low and hollow voice, from within, bade him enter. He passed into the apartment:—it was spacious and lofty. At a

table, upon which were arranged various papers, and writing materials, was seated that monk, of whom we before made mention. The ecclesiastic rose, and the two, forthwith, proceeded to confer together, respecting a mysterious and important matter, which the reader may learn, in the sequel.

On the departure of the venerable Scot, the monk resumed the avocation, which his visitor had disturbed, and, for upwards of an hour, sedulously applied himself to his writing. At length, throwing aside the pen, he bent his elbow on the table, and, burying his forehead and face, within the palms of his hands, seemed to be absorbed in deep cogitation.

“ ‘Tis well,” he murmured to himself, half audibly, “ ‘tis well to be provided against the worst. *What if I perish suddenly, and without warning?* Yes, ‘tis best; nor can I too early justify the integrity, on which that poor girl, in all the unsuspiciousness of her enthusiasm, based her unhappy prepossession:—she fell a victim to my imaginary dereliction of honour. Oh! if it be permitted to the just emancipated spirit, to witness what takes place on this Cimmerian globe, let her now look down, in pardon and compassion! Yet, oh, yet! I feel our souls shall meet, and sympathize beyond the grave, without the coil and blindness of the flesh, sullyng their purity, or darkening their intelligence; the memory of our fatal intercourse, upon earth, will be the link to bind us together, in immortality. Oh, my dead love!—how loved, I little dreamt, till I sped thee, with a blessing, on thy dark way,—if, at last, thou canst, indeed, read my soul, as thou didst fondly conceive, during thy visionary life-time, to be in thy competence; vouchsafe to shed a beam of mercy on thy murderer!—console him, if it be at thy volition, with the thought, that thou dost him that justice, at length, from conviction, which, despite of what seemed, to thee, indubitable evidence of his crime, thy faith, begat of immeasurable love, was inclined, whilst thou tarriedst here, to render him.

Spirit of the departed! do you know that I am innocent?"

The soliloquist paused, and dropped his hands, when, by some accidental movement, his elbow struck the lamp from off the table; the light went out, and the pensive habitant of that remote chamber sat alone, and in darkness. He raised his eyes, and a curdling thrill crept through his veins! for, lo! the prayer, that, almost silently, had welled up from the sanctuary of his soul, had reached its aim, *and had an answer*. The far depths of the room became gradually brightened with a glory, not of this world; and a dim, thin, human, shape, slowly developed its indistinct and shadowy outline, by insensibly divesting itself, as it were, of one immortal shroud after another, till it stood, pale and confessed, in ethereal repose.

The dilated orbs of the monk became transfixed, on the apparition, which, by degrees, cleared itself to his sight and sense; and he watched, calm, hueless, and set in immortal beauty, the features of the being, whom, in his rapt musing, he had involuntarily invoked. Awful, and radiant, like that of an angel, shone her countenance: she spoke no word, but fixed her stony gaze upon the ecclesiastic, who caught, for a brief second, one celestial smile—a look that could not die; while, upon those pallid lips, yet safe from the outrage of the tomb, there crept a tremulous motion, which, however slight, evanescent, and inaudible, was intelligible, beyond all articulation. It passed into the beholder's heart, with electric facility, and he saw that his inquiry was answered; and he knew, and soothing was the intuitive consciousness, that all was at length explained; and, he believed, that the spirit of the departed, with a love, not to be dated or bounded by the pulse's throb, had appeared to intimate to him his acquittal. "It was a moment worthy years;" he bowed his head,— and behold! * * * * *

Another hour elapsed, and Count Rodna repeated his visit to the lonely apartment. He came, accompanied by the boy; they found the monk seated in darkness, his mien was solemn and composed, and his eyes full of tenderness and thought. He made no allusion to the visitation of the phantom. The Scot, having affixed his name to certain papers, that the monk silently presented to him, placed them before his youthful companion, to subscribe after him. The boy received the pen, but paused, as in thought, ere he dipped it in the ink.—He looked his revered protector in the face, and seemed to hesitate.

“Sign, child,” said Count Rodna.

“Sigismund?” inquired the boy.

“Of course, Sigismund,” replied the count, with some surprise.

“And what besides, sir?” interrogated the boy, with a meaning emphasis.

Count Rodna was about to answer, but the monk took up the word—

“Sigismund will do: John Sigismund, my brave boy, an you will,—there needs no more.”

“And may I ask, reverend father, without offence, what is the purport of these writings, since they require my signature?”

“They are meant to remedy, as far as is now possible, the evil, consequent upon a most base and dark conspiracy; and eventually to vindicate the conduct of an involuntary abettor thereof, from much misrepresentation, and rescue his name from unmerited obloquy.”

“You speak obscurely, father,” said Sigismund; “nevertheless, I will not refuse to sign, if my grandfather still wishes it.”

“Twas for that I brought you hither,” said Count Rodna; “you are more indebted to this holy man, than”—the monk put his finger to his lip, and as Count Rodna paused, the boy had already signed the paper.

"IWAN SIGISMUND!" said the father, taking the paper in his hands.

"Iwan and John are equivalent, you know," remarked the boy, with a smile.

"True, my son; though John was, in this case, preferable."

"And now attend to me;—what remains to be done, is not to be forgotten. It is *my* turn to sign;" and the monk took up the pen, and, after looking at Sigismund, for an instant, with a meaning glance, traced the characters of A NAME upon the paper. When he had done, he handed the inscription to the youth, whose countenance and manner, on beholding what was written, betrayed the extremest astonishment. "This half-hour, I trust, will remain indelibly stamped upon the volume of your brain," presently, observed the monk, in an almost solemn voice; "and when next, my son, you cast eyes upon these three signatures, the obscurity you speak of, will be illumined, and you become cognizant of the purport of these papers; till when, may peace, virtue, and honourable thoughts be with you, in all your ingoings and outcomings!" Shortly afterwards, Count Rodna retired, as he came, bearing Sigismund away with him.

Veronica, on retiring to her repose, felt a passing sensation of wonder, at having to substitute for her previous dormitory, the more commodious and splendid chamber, into which she was now shown, by the sedate matron, to whom that duty was assigned, and who, having seen the child into bed, left her to solitude and darkness. The marvellous occurrences of the past day, had contributed to relax the mental powers of Veronica, and to render her more than commonly susceptible of visionary influences. The spirit of superstition, indeed, at that "witching hour," darkened over the house, and found, in the thick-coming fancies of its habitants, a meet atmosphere, wherein to move her "sail-stretched" wings. Every one appeared, more or less, enthralled by the bale-

ful presence,—nor was this vague and involuntary impression, without excuse. The untimely, and, as was believed, the supernatural tempest, which had raged, without intermission, for so many hours, and with such intemperate violence,—the frequent, and sulphureous lightnings, which, throughout the day, had illumined the thick vault of Heaven; the thunderbolt, which that morning had struck the mansion, as if to hurl it to its base,—and rising above all, the visiting phantom, who, so lately, had held mysterious commune with the foreign and unknown proprietor of the domain;—all these causes presented a mighty incentive to shadowy, and imaginary terrors. And what wonder, that a mere child should fail to escape the general contagion? But, in addition to these unsubstantial impressions, the daughter of Eissenburg, had to endure feelings of distress, peculiar to herself. The strange temerity of the man, who had brought them to that temporary residence, his alarming discourse with her father, to which she had listened, with a terrified and absorbed attention; his success in inveigling him, in spite of the element's tempestuous havock, to leave the house—which, child as she was, filled her mind with strong, though indefinite forebodings,—the mysterious conduct, and sullen demeanour of Hubert, since his return; these were incidents, calculated to debilitate her nerves, even until her shattered faculties lost all confidence in their proper strength, and resources.

It will have been gathered, from many incidental notices, that Veronica was no ordinary child,—her understanding was, indeed, precocious, beyond the usual capacities of her age. Nevertheless, it should be considered, that the times on which she was cast, were comparatively unenlightened, and contemporary prejudices tended, of course, to shackle the exercise, and free growth of her natural good sense. Her strong leaning, moreover, to the contemplation of those momentous truths, enforced at the Reformation, and the poetical and prophetic garb, in which those truths clothed themselves,

superinduced a train of thinking, and the lurking incitements to a practical error, with respect to religion, which, although of a distinct character from the prevailing superstition, was not less enervating and fatal.

On this opposite fallacy we have, already, had occasion to animadvert; and it was in that holy, though, if we may so say, somewhat Hebrew spirit, that sublime trust in the omnipresence, and protecting inspiration of her Heavenly Parent, that Veronica breathed, in a soft tone, her extempore and simple supplication to the Deity. The painful impression, which the wonders of the last few hours had wrought on her, she confessed to the abstracted and invisible principle, whose element is infinitude, and she looked for relief and guidance, not to any defined and outward presentment; she invoked no sensuous incarnation, no oracular or mediatory semblance, but confided implicitly in the inward, and spiritual workings of her soul. Her trust rested in the Supreme of things; in the direct minist'ring of God himself, in her heart. She was slowly, and insensibly detached from this elevation of her nature, by the intervention of certain sounds and appearances, which, for awhile, had solicited her bodily organs, without arresting her mental consciousness. But, however engrossed, her thoughts became gradually abstracted from their divine object, and settled on the mortal and immediate interests, that pressed upon her;—these proved, in the event, sufficiently startling. A stream of light fell across the bed, upon which Veronica knelt, though not until above a minute after her eyes caught the radiance, did she perceive that it issued through a narrow chink or incisure, which the hand of time had worked, or warped, in the wainscot of her apartment. For an instant, Veronica gazed intently on the opening, and, having slid softly from her lofty couch, she cautiously, and with a beating heart, stole to the aperture. On looking through, she descried the mysterious guide, traversing, with hasty tread,

the floor of the adjoining chamber. Recoiling with instinctive terror, she would fain have averted her eyes; but a sort of prophetic fascination rivetted her gaze: presently, she observed him adjusting his dress and countenance, at a mirror, which stood opposite; but it is out of the power of words to depict her amazement, at the magical transformation, which then she witnessed. Throwing aside his grey doublet, the unknown discovered to view, a coat of chain mail beneath. At the same time, the black uncouth patch, which had hitherto defaced half his visage, was vail'd on one side, and she noticed him doff a light flaxen peruke, which had overlaid his natural hyperian curls. The next instant, as he turned away from the glass, her eyes settled on the strikingly handsome face of one, whose real and juvenile appearance, these adscititious disfigurements had previously obscured. Childhood is naturally disposed to rely on the reality of things. 'Tis its high instinct, ere (to use the expression of a great poet) —

“ It forget the glories it hath seen,
Of that imperial palace whence it came.”

The first impression of the simple maiden, was, that she beheld the operation, and result of “mighty magic;” for even conjuration seemed to her more credible than deceit. Silly girl! — and yet in that, as in other matters, “when thou hast more wit,” as Juliet’s nurse told her, “thou wilt know better.”

We have said, that the face on which Veronica now tremblingly gazed was handsome; but it was not so from expression. We have to add, that it was intelligent and commanding; yet the unknown’s was far from being a countenance, on whose lineaments the eye might delightedly linger. On his desperate brow, in his dark flaming eye, the thoughts and conceptions of precocious crime, already anticipated a portion of those tell-tale, and terrible characteristics, more proper to the veteran criminal.

* Wordsworth,

His features were fixed, in an expression of determined, and ferocious villainy. Passion — fatal and indelible passion — was stamped on his front, in appalling tokens. Usually, in the physiognomy of the most depraved, some trait or other, lurks behind, to evidence, that his common humanity hath lent root to some vulnerable point of tenderness; but, about this man, there was no such “ touch of pity.”

“ *Monstrum nulla viitute redemptum.*”

At a first view, however, the spirit, which looked forth from his brilliant, and fiery glance, might seem to indicate a lofty, and a generous temperament; but a deeper insight, into its meaning, would correct the illusion. They were not the aspirings of a noble soul — noble, however erring, which that fierce and violent look betokened; but, rather, the sanguinary, and self-willed temper of the primal murderer. He seemed a man, capable alike of conceiving, and executing the most audacious deeds. One quality, however, distinguished him, which seldom fails to attract the vulgar, and command their admiration, even when accompanied with the allay of a thousand crimes, and although therein, the possessor, after all, only shares the common instinct of the wolf, and the hyena. This consisted in that dogged, indomitable courage, in encountering, and address in surmounting difficulties, which no object could divert, no danger deter, and which, “ if the cracked orbs should split and fall,”* they would not humble. Such was the character, which might be easily gleaned, from a close study of the unknown’s countenance, — a character, unreproved by an atom of principle, and, perhaps, bolstered in its iniquity, by a certain degree of natural talent, and guided and directed, by the appliances of a cultivated mind. If we reflect, for a moment, what tremendous advantage over his fellows, that man possesses, whom Nature hath gifted,

* Fanshaw.

with a vigorous frame, and a hardy constitution, and who, in the furthering of his selfish schemes, recks neither opinion nor death, nor “the dread of something after death,” whom, not even the superstitious misgivings, the *δεισιδαιμονία* of Paganism, restrains, we may form some idea of THEIR critical situation, whose hard fate had thrown them on the trail of this ruthless ruffian, whether, at first, for enemies or friends, in all probability, in the long run, for victims.

Veronica had not, as yet, recovered from her amazement, at witnessing this man’s metamorphosis, when three or four low taps, on the adjoining chamber-door aroused her. In an instant, *les grosses tresses* were again collocated over the unknown’s black glossy ringlets, and disposed so as to conceal his stern, and polished brow. The immense patch overspread one-half of his countenance, and, instead of the dawn of manhood, which properly distinguished him, his appearance became stamped with an almost senile character. The unknown then proceeded to undo the inside fastening of the door. Veronica could hardly believe her eyes. Was she awake?—Why, what could *her father* want, at midnight, with this man? If her astonishment was unbounded, her apprehensions were no less on the alert. She longed to shriek aloud to Vicchy, that the person before him was other than he seemed. But her tongue clave to the roof of her unmoistened mouth. She felt nailed to the spot, where she stood, beholding, as under a nightmare spell, the fate of her dearest sire, evolve, like some mighty drama, but incapable of stretching out a finger, to avert the catastrophe; — a weight, like that of the Carpathians, lay upon, and unnerved her joints. Whilst she continued in this state of entire incertitude, the door was reclosed, and Vicchy slowly advanced into the room. The change which appeared in him was marvellous; all colour had fled his cheeks, which were of a ghastly whiteness; his eyes were glazed; his limbs seemed too

feeble to sustain their allotted weight ; he trembled ; and, as he threw himself into a chair, his distracted gaze superadded an appearance of wildness, to the haggard care, impressed upon his countenance.

The unknown commenced the interview, with an expression of impatience. “ Wherefore,” he demanded, “ droop’st thou now ? Is not the deed, we meditate, an act of justice ? If there be wrong, let those who command the performance, look to it ; — for us, we are but the executioners of majesty ; thou saw’st the instrument with thine own eyes, — the imperial arms — the sign manual — would’st thou look again ? I have it yet about me. — See, here,” and he drew from his person a roll, similar, in shape and appearance, to the parchment, which the lightning had shrivelled that morn. “ Call up your blood again, my lord duke, and gaze,” proceeded the stranger, as he held the parchment towards Vicchi, with his left hand. “ *Ferdinand the First ! ha !*” and, at the exclamation, a hollow sound, as of a drum, evidenced the force, with which he struck the fore-finger of his right hand, against the document. “ *Charles the Fifth !* do you mark ?” and the dauntless desperado repeated the stroke. “ If the emperor, and his brother,” he continued, pointing, with his finger, impressively to different parts of the writing, “ *will* scatter their promissory temptations through Europe, ’tis at their own risk. A fraction of the mighty recompence they engage for, will, through the church’s charitable alchemy, root out, from our souls, whatever vile excrescence, obedience to their majesties might engraft there. But thou art dumb.”

“ Not so,” responded Vicchi, in a broken voice, “ I was but marvelling what offence either Peter Pereny, or this lad can have committed, against Ferdinand and Charles, that they should join in seeking their lives, with such pertinacity ; or how it can be worth their while, to drain their exchequer for such an object.”

“ That concerns us not,” replied the other ; “ they,

doubtless, have their sufficing reasons, or they think so, which comes to the same thing."

"Know you no cause?" asked Vicchy, much in that procrastinating spirit, with which, we recollect, when a child, to have turned from the nauseous drug, we knew, we should have, at last, to swallow.

"Men say," returned the unknown, "that Pereny played the traitor before Buda, and was the occasion of Roccandolph's defeat, by the lord regent. If so, he well merits his punishment; though why his life should be pursued so rancorously, is not stated in the proclamation, nor do I pretend to conjecture. But we are losing time."

"Oh, no, we are not," cried Vicchy, eagerly; "while you converse, I forget myself. In pity, talk on. Would you have my aid herein, we must dally awhile; say any thing, only let me hear your voice. Speak on some indifferent matter; tell me, how it is, that, Pereny is still alive, in the teeth of the deadly will of Ferdinand and Charles. By what means has he eluded their vengeance?"

"By disguise, flight, and keeping out of the way? The graf would out-do Proteus, yet I will reach his heart, and set my seal upon him. You must know, for a time, he found a fautorer in Solyman; but the sultan has lately left him to his shifts, not approving, as the report goes, of his having suffered the princess Beatrice, to slip so easily through his fingers—but you know most about that *raptus*."

"A truce, sir, to such insinuations: there's offence in what you say," replied Vicchy, in a tone of austere gravity.

"Well, well, as you will; your cheek hath now the true livery. Oh, how bravely that hasty spark of anger shows in you! But this gossip is more than idle: have you your weapon?"

"It hangs in my room. In the hurry of the moment, I forgot it," answered Vicchy, tremblingly.

"That was amiss," observed the other. "Here, take mine, whilst I find my way to the apartment, where we spoke this morning, to seize hold of that jewelled spear, suspended against the wainscot. Now for action."

"But leave me a minute's thought, I beg," implored Vicchy, his heart almost failing him; "perchance, we are wrong."

"Not a second, man," answered the unknown: "you allowed, this morning, you had sufficient motives for the deed. I found you apt; why need I repeat my argument—amazing wealth!"

"But, ah! the sin," interrupted Vicchy, in a tone of nervous emotion; "the sin!"

"Pshaw! St. Peter's key is of gold. A trifling penance. Nay, nay, nay; think rather of your revenge. Pereny, recollect, might have prevented your attainder; since he, at all events, must have known your innocence. Be of good cheer. Revenge, which the gods were said to begrudge us mortals, and monopolize to themselves. Dost thou still hesitate? 'Sdeath, what wouldst thou have?"

Vicchy rose, and walked away. He pressed his hand to his brow. "'Tis a horrid crime!" he said, shudderingly, reseating himself, at the foot of the bed.

"That will gold remit; but I tell you, 'tis none. Think yourself the executioner of justice, and well fee'd too; since I swear to thee again, thou shalt have a moiety of the reward. Why dost shake, like a girl in a fever? What a coil is here! Revenge, wealth, on the one hand; on the other, exposure—death! Rise, Eissenburg, and be a man!"

"I am both ways lost," cried Vicchy; "but where," he whispered, "where sleeps the boy?"

"In the next chamber," replied the villain.

"So near!" said the other.

Again he slowly rose, and tottered across the room, seeming to move with difficulty. His face was contorted,

and there was a shrinking of his body, which not unaptly represented the strife and loathing within him. After some moments, he abruptly came up to the unknown — “Take back this iron aspic,” he cried, in a half scream, “I cannot slay, where is no resistance.”

“Then, my lord, will the blackened features, which Veronica loves, become the perch of crows,” said the other drily.

“And better it were so; better my grave were the maw of carrion, than shed innocent blood,” rejoined Hubert, with deep feeling.

“Besides,” persisted the young and subtle instigator, without heeding, or perhaps hearing him, “the prophecy of Unna, touching the crown of Hungary, will be of no avail; its fulfilment being contingent on the death of this boy.” Thus glazed the serpent, and Vicchy’s resolution was shaken.

“You say right; so it was. Well, I will cast the gold, at the foot of the altar, and perhaps —” The casuist stopped short. The anticipated possibility of Heaven’s pardon, he dared not breathe aloud.—“Only,” shortly added the wretched father, “suffer me to awake Veronica, that she may be in readiness.”

“Not before the deed be done,” objected the other, with a suppressed, and portentous sort of chuckle. “Remember, one blow, and sure. There must be no death-moan, to alarm the house. Then sever the head clean from the shoulders; we lose our labour else. I’ll deal with Pereny in the same sort. He’s in the chapel, doing penance; he could not die more seasonably for salvation. Do you wait on the spot, till I join you.”

“What, all alone with the decapitated trunk!” said Vicchy, with an internal shiver.

“Tush! man, I’ll warrant ‘twill not harm you,” returned the other. “After having overpowered the warden, you may arouse your child, and then we have nothing to do but to decamp.”

"Who has the ordering of the horses?" inquired Vicchy.

"Unna," was the reply. "She is even now without, waiting for us. Are you resolved?"

"I think I am," murmured the infatuated man; while the idea of his fallen condition burned, like living coal in his heart.

"That's well," said the unknown. "I go. Mark me—ere two minutes elapse, I reach down the spear from the wall; in two more, I calculate to arrive at the chapel; a fifth, and Pereny is a headless corpse. Do you time your movements to mine: courage!" and the dreadful man passed without the chamber.

How can we dive into the mysterious recesses of the human heart, or how explain the torture, the hesitation, the conflicting passions, which held the mind of Vicchy, "like to a little kingdom in a state of insurrection!" This instant, his hand compressed his sword's hilt, with the desperate energy of a maniac; and the next, he cast the weapon from him, with horror and indignation, resolved to lend a deaf ear to the whisperings of his venal nature, and not to act the hireling bravo, though only thereby he might insure his child a diadem, or "reprieve him from the wrath of greatest justice." In this dubious and tumultuous dilemma, Vicchy's soul hovered on the verge of the tremendous abyss. In vain, he conjured up every palliative, that he could think of, to quiet the indignant remonstrances of conscience—in vain, he pleaded hard, that self-preservation left him no choice—in vain, he called to mind the augury of the sybil, and revolved the contingent contrast of amazing wealth, and abject penury—in vain, he endeavoured to trust in the facility of repentance; in the unbounded goodness of his church to her wealthy suppliants—whether as anodynes, or stimulants, these suggestions were of no avail. NOT ALL THE SUBTLETY OF VICCHY'S REASONING COULD RAISE THE DEVIL. "Who hesitates, is lost," is a fiction of the poet,

just as applicable, at any rate, to the one sex as to the other ; 'tis, indeed, with some qualification, the condition of tottering humanity ; and he was a traducer, who would have confined the aphorism to the purer half of our species ; but, whether predicated of man or woman, the maxim, like most other apothegms, is stated in terms, much too unqualified. No, “thanks to the human heart, by which we live !” while the scale yet vibrates, even though the fraction of a scruple might incline the balance, our better angel has not abandoned us. There is no calculating on the tenacity, with which strong virtue links itself to our nature, and who shall set bounds to the goodness of God ? 'Tis hard to wrestle with our wish, in opposition to habit, and temptation, and all that the world makes strong ; 'tis harder to come off victorious, but it is not impossible ; and whosoever hath made diligent inquiry into human nature, or hath observed the disposition of his own soul—by what springs it is moved, and how it is operated on, and corrected—will readily acknowledge, that he is free to coquet with the evil one, to within a hair's breadth of compliance, and yet ultimately hold out ; and so, perhaps, will his virtues come out more refined, and energetic, from the very struggle, which inferred their ruin. Let us, then, hear no more of this *bon mot* of Roscommon. Alas ! the race of Adam yet inherits too great a portion of the wavering, and instability, which characterised our frail progenitors ; such a persuasion, as we here protest against, were as bands of iron, round a vicious inclination ; and really, in our opinion, only the artifice of the soul's adversary could have passed so insidious a sentiment into a proverb. “Qua nulla pernicies major hominum vitæ potuit afferri.”*

A minute had already elapsed, and Vicchy had still to silence the whispering voice within. We have somewhere intimated, or meant to do so, that the Hungarian

* Cicero, De Off. xi. 3. See also, to the same purport, Alison's Sermons, vol. ii. p. 432.

noble, might rather be regarded as weak, than unprincipled ; and, on finding himself borne along, to the very point of such horrible, and revolting crime, the peril of his position, excited an emotion of horror, with which the reader will readily sympathize. It appears wonderful, how the unknown came to trust to the assistance of such a neophyte ; a man, too, possessed of such a wavering disposition, as that, which Vicchy had exhibited ; but having, himself, at a single *coup d'essai*, " fallen such a pernicious height,"* the accomplished ruffian (*repente turpissimus*), might not be aware, by what compunctions, and progressive steps, most men descend iniquity's graduated scale. Three minutes went by as a second, and the mind of Vicchy tossed and surged, with the tempest of his emotion. A kind of paralysis came over him, which was the more discomfiting, that he seemed bereaved of all consistent thinking. Over all his ideas, however, one demoniac impulse held tyrant sway, unto which he longed to give the reins, in order to escape from the torturing, giddiness, and agony of mind, which resistance, and incertitude occasioned.

In the meantime, the howling of the storm, never, for an instant, ceased, and it seemed, to the excited mind of Vicchy, that the congregated bolts of Heaven, were being hurled against the devoted mansion. He clasped his hands together, and, pressing them to his forehead, hid his face upon the bed. Thought with him was stagnant. Even as he lay, thus spell bound, all at once, between the intervals of the crashing elements, a soft sigh vibrated, so close on his ear, that, as it were, he could feel its touch ; he raised his head, and listened — it was not repeated. Shifting his position, he saw that he was alone ; there was no time for surprise, for now he hears a hasty footstep hurrying along the corridor. The gentle suspiration, he had just caught, is " back resounded," and echoed, with an emphasis, such

* Milton.

as “ hell sighed from all her caves, at the hideous name of Death,” what time the abhorred offspring of Sin broke through the torn entrails of his incestuous mother, and with an inflamed visage and distracted gestures, he, that heaved that groan, rushed, breathlessly into the chamber. Vicchy trembled. “ Sceptered damnation!—we must be betrayed!—the spear is removed from the wall!” was all that, at first, the passionate villain could utter, through his clenched teeth. His one eye shot fire, and his nostrils were distended, partly, perhaps, with rage, but, also, evidencing the indomitable resolution of his nature. “ He shall not escape me this time, notwithstanding!” he cried; “ give me my sword again?” Vicchy, only the minute before, had thrown the weapon from him; he looked for it upon the bed—started—searched the room, but the instrument was not discoverable. The other, whilst he watched his movements, reciprocated the astonishment, which could be plainly read in Hubert’s countenance. In three words, he was informed of the loss of the sword, though its disappearance could not be accounted for.

“ Now do you suppose,” he replied, “ that I’ll be fobbed off in this fashion?” and, then, he proceeded to accuse Vicchy, in no measured terms, of practising treachery; the latter rebutted the charge, and vehemently protested his ignorance of how the weapon had been conveyed away.

“ I must take your word,” said the unknown, seeming to check his rising passion; “ since, in the present exigence, I have nothing else for it; but, rely upon this, if you, indeed, play me false, nor time, nor place shall screen you from my vengeance. When you least expect it, at dead of night, I may draw your curtain, or come upon you, in the very heart of rest. Understand, distinctly, Eissenburg, I have a hand and poniard, to reach a traitor’s bosom, were he sheltered, under the capacious purple of Cardinal Martinuzzi, or, for that matter, of his Holiness himself—so sure as you betray me, so surely

will I prosecute, and obtain revenge." He paused ; and Vicchy, plunged in thought, received this intimation, in moody silence.

" But your sword hangs in your chamber, you say," resumed the ruffian ; " Wait here — I'll be back, with the graf's head, in a twinkling ;" and again the ruthless desperado quitted the apartment. But not, as in the former instance, did he leave Vicchy a prey to doubt and horror — the removal of the jewelled spear — the unaccountable disappearance of that, with which the ruffian had entrusted him, were startling incidents, which assumed all the appearance of a direct interposition from above. Nay, Vicchy viewed these unexpected obstacles, thrown in the way of murder, as an index of the line of conduct, which the emergency required of him. It was but the turn of an atom in the scale, but that was enough. The unknown's hasty, and ill-timed insinuation of treachery, and the jarring to which it gave occasion, however momentary, operated, like the sprinkling of cold water on one in a syncope, and renewed the tone and elasticity of Vicchy's mind. Influenced by causes, which he looked upon as little less than miraculous, he felt impelled to save the life of the very youth, who, only a minute before, was within an ace of becoming his victim. With nervous trepidation, he measured the few steps to the entrance of the adjoining chamber, and there stood, half a minute, to recover his self-possession. The room, into which he felt his way, was involved in pitchy darkness. Fearing, that the moments were too precious to admit of his now remedying his inadvertence in not having brought with him the lamp, and thinking, at once to awaken Sigismund, and apprise him of the danger, in which he stood of his life, that the lad might seek protection of some of the household, Vicchy immediately advanced forward ; but as he knew neither the size, nor local hindrances of the apartment, he was obliged to grope his way, with a stealthy and ill-assured step. In

this unnatural, and constrained attitude, he had proceeded a few paces, when his ear caught a faint yell, succeeded by the cries of terror, and the groans of death, which appeared to proceed from a remote part of the building. Then he apprehended that the bloody work was going on, and knew that he had not a moment to lose.

“Arise!” he cried, in a vehement whisper, “arise, Sir Sigismund, and save yourself—you will be murdered else. What, ho!—boy up! and escape while yet you may.” He had scarcely spoken these words, when a short and wild shriek, uttered, even within a yard of the spot, he stood on, pierced his senses, followed by a noise, which sounded like the fall of a human being upon the floor. There was something in the cry, painfully familiar to him—perhaps his Veronica; but THAT was too terrible for belief! and Hubert held his breath—his heart stood still—he remained rooted to the spot, while the cold drops burst out from every pore:

————— “Oh! that fear,
When the heart longs to know what it is death to hear.”*

At the same moment, there were hurryings to and fro—then came shouts and clamour—the clashing of swords and the report of fire arms; and then, the shrill and soul-harrowing exclamation from a hundred voices, of “murder!” and the thunder pealed, and the vociferation seemed to be reverberated—horrible murder!—and again, and yet again, below—around—far—near, resounded the cry of “murder! murder! murder!”—

“————— so from the body of a single deed,
A thousand ghastly fears and haunting thoughts proceed.”†

The din of elements, and the human outcry mingled their horrors; but the uproar within doors was more awful than the raging of the storm. “Murder! sacrilege! seize the villain!” resounded from every quarter. The voices ap-

* Croly.

† Wordsworth.

proached. Presently, after a pause in the elemental "hurly burly," of unusual duration, there succeeded a far louder clap of thunder than any yet, and the lightning, which glared away the darkness, quivered along the blade of an extended weapon, right before the eyes of Vicchy; but even louder than the loud thunder, rose the shriek of the magnat, as his distracted vision glanced on the being, who still upheld that instrument of death, though her form and features, which were worth all the world to him, lay stretched on the floor, all wan and lifeless.

The next minute darkness returned, and her father raised the inanimate child in his arms, to convey her to the light. His was a vain endeavour, to loosen from her grasp the naked scimitar. Half way between the two rooms, he was compelled to stand on one side, to let pass a crowd of armed domestics, bearing along with them the murderer, disarmed, and bleeding at every pore. His light hair was scorched, and dabbled in gore, and his hands were incarnadine, with the same horrid fluid. Just as the party came up to where the two were stationed, Veronica, with a short convulsive grasp, recovered her consciousness; but, on beholding the blood-stained spectacle of the assassin, she echoed shriek on shriek, with childish reiteration, whilst her father himself was soon incapacitated, from his vain attempts at quieting her terrors. "The villain's confederate!" shouted several voices; "lay hands on him." At the words, the person of Vicchy was forcibly, held captive. To no purpose Veronica vociferated, in a tone of deep emotion, "He is innocent! he is innocent! he would have saved Sir Sigismund." Her piercing exclamations rent the air; but on the air they spent their force—

"——— her words of flame,
And mightier looks availed not."*

* Shelley.

All had too good grounds, they believed, wherewith to substantiate the guilt of Vicchy, and, in their first exasperation, at the crime of the murderer, and bitter joy at his detection, they had no room for sympathy, with his child, and were scarcely in a frame of mind to suspend, or forego their hallowed anger.

But how felt that wretched man? As one, from off whose conscience a fearful load has been removed. True, he was in durance, but that very circumstance, by showing him the brink, on which he had stood, made his heart rebound, in gratitude for his redemption. True, he was about to be carried off to imprisonment on a charge of murder, but he owned the conscious freedom from blood-guiltiness, which he was so near forfeiting, and felt, that the hand of him, who spake the soul into being was upon him—*Digitus Dei est hic!*

With what different emotions, and environed by what dreadful circumstances, might he not, at that moment, have been under arrest! The contrast struck him with awe and gratitude, to think, that his soul was still white. “*Hal’á Istennek!**” he murmured to himself with deep emotion—“*Hal’á Istennek!*” With these words, he leant over his daughter, sobbing like a child; but such tears were sweet, and for the first time, since he had entered that house, Vicchy might be said to be comparatively happy. His state of mind, however, though it has required many words for explanation, and analysis, was condensed into a single emotion, which was, in him, the birth of an instant. The guard of retainers, armed with carabines, and swords, hurried the prisoners forward, into that same refectory, where the venerable Count Rodna had first welcomed Vicchy to the shelter of his hospitable roof. Veronica entered, with the general rush, clinging close to her father’s knees. Here the party halted for a moment, for the purpose of having the murderer and his accomplice ironed.

* God be thanked.

The dauntless intrepidity of the youthful assassin, was bottomed on that *agehinoia*, that happy decision, and undoubting confidence, in his own powers of mind, in moments of difficulty and danger, which habitual success is qualified to produce, and which may be considered essential points in the composition of the heroic character. He was fully sensible of his perilous situation, but his spirit, instead of blenching beneath the sudden disaster, expanded to meet the magnitude of the risk, and proved itself equal to the crisis : *Il peut prendre son parti.* Struck to the earth, he yet stood, like a fresh Antæus, and, in the extremity of his fate, his springy spirit rebounded, and made itself triumphant. With a searching eye, he looked about, in what way he might recover his liberty, and the quickness of his genius suggested an expedient, which circumstances seemed to favour. Suddenly, and almost at unawares, he extricated his sword-arm, out of the gripe of his right-hand guard, and, as he tripped up the fellow's heels, snatched a carabine from his baldric. With the butt-end, he dashed to the ground one near him, who had raised a dagger within a hand's breadth of his bosom. Seized by another assailant, he brought the muzzle of the carabine, within an inch of his head, and, firing, shot him dead upon the spot : then, wielding an arm of iron, he either struck down, or shook off, the restraint of such as closed around him, and, with a bound, like that of a tiger, clearing the space to where Veronica, trembling and pale, stood, near her father, wrenched the sword, she held, perhaps, unconsciously, out of the child's grasp, and, at once, sprung upon his assailants, with the fury of a hunted lion, among a pack of hounds. All this passed like successive flashes of the lightning. It happened, that the defence of the domestics was weakened, and their object distracted, by the apparent necessity of maintaining guard over the prisoner, who remained inactive. Profiting by this imperfect resistance, the dauntless villain, nerved with a strength, few men could boast, pressed his

advantage, with such skill and vigour, that his dismayed opponents recoiled from him on all sides. The greater number of those, who were not disabled, or sent on the pilgrimage of death, were collected, at the upper end of the apartment. As the fray relaxed, carabines were loaded, and discharged at the unconquerable swordsman, but his sweeping movements, and the rapidity of his attacks, mocked the random aim of men, in the confusion of such a scene; though, indeed, he might hardly, much longer, have escaped the detached shot, which whizzed around him, if, from the commencement, he had not ascertained a mode of deliverance, which Heaven itself seemed to open to him. The strife being still at the hottest, he darted off, with the speed and fierceness of a falcon in its stoop, to the opposite side of the apartment. Availing himself of a ledge, which jutted out beneath the window, he caught, gymnastically, with his hand, at one of the pointed arches, which had resisted the thunderbolt of the preceding day, and, at his clutch, a considerable portion of the shafted casement, worn by time, or else injured by the lightning, fell, inward, with a tremendous crash. In an instant after, his athletic form was seen towering in the breach, as in mid air. There, with a hoarse laugh of defiance, he poised himself for a moment, and then, whilst a dozen bullets rattled, impotent, against the mouldering framework, the baffled marksmen might catch the splashing sound without, which told that he had plunged, into the waters of the moat. Thus the unknown assured his safety, and his enraged guards, judging it hopeless to endeavour to recapture him, were resolved, that the remaining delinquent should not likewise effect his escape. For greater security, as handcuffs were not forthcoming, they proceeded to pinion his arms over the elbows, by a strong cord, drawn tight round the body, and carefully knotted behind. While this was being made fast, the door, at the lower end of the room unclosed, and a number of the retainers of the house-

hold were seen advancing, in mournful procession, bearing the gory corpse of him, who had been murdered, at the foot of the altar. The body was here deposited on the large table, in the middle of the apartment. The eyes of Vicchy were naturally turned to the spot. There stood the monk, whom he had twice before fallen in with beneath that roof, and whom, likewise, he had beheld, under mysterious circumstances, during his absence with, the homicide ; his face, which was overshadowed by his cowl, was gently bent over the corpse, and he appeared absorbed in contemplation of that gory spectacle. Presently, Vicchy's looks encountered those of a man, who stood a short way off, with folded arms and a thoughtful eye. He started. "Merciful powers !" he murmured, "can it be he ? — Pereny ! — alive and unharmed ! If, if thou art not a mockery,— what cold, stiff, and senseless clod of earth is *that*, whose ghastly form lies stretched upon the bloody table ? *Whom has the assassin sacrificed?*" He gazed wildly in the direction of the corpse, but the course of his thoughts was here interrupted by the lad Sigismund, who, in uncontrollable agitation, threw himself beside the dead body, bursting out in a tone, which went through the hearts of all present—

" My more than father, dost thou lie there, weltering in thy blood ? Let me mingle my tears with the precious current — and is grief then all the incense, thy bleeding corpse should obtain ? Alas ! I have none else ; but a day may come — yes, a day may come, when thy ashes shall be bedewed, and thy spirit appeased, with manlier offerings, and yet this blood may call down retribution ; till when, the curse of Cain be on thy murderer ! and, be this my memory ." Saying these words, he tore off the corner of a light silken scarf, from the waist of the murdered man, and pressing it in the ensanguined die, thus subjoined, in a more solemn tone : " I vow, through all time, and all change, to bear this property about me, till hereafter, I come across the author of this butchery !

when I will steep it in his heart's best blood ; so help me God, at my need, as I fulfil my engagement, and expiate thy death — friend, protector, cherisher of the friendless orphan !” and the boy, placing the shred within his vest, fell, weeping, on the floor.

A piteous exclamation, or yell of deep grief, burst from the assembled retainers of the murdered count, which, presently, gave place to the graver lament of Pereny, who, deeply moved, bent over the body. “ And art thou gone before me, my friend ? — exile of Caledonia ! Hath thy long pilgrimage closed at last, in blood ? Whom have I now to speak to, of the glory and shame of the past, the horrors of the present, or the chances of the future ? In whose sympathising ear shall I confide my misfortunes ? Thou couldst, indeed, feel for the Hungarian magnat ; for as our fate was not dissimilar, so our woes were the same ; thou readest my grief in thine own heart. Oh ! would to God, I were laid beside thee, my last, my only friend !” Vicchy heard no more, for now he, and his daughter were withdrawn from the apartment.

MANUSCRIPT VIII.

“ Bis ille miser, qui serus amavit.”

MILTON.

“ Upon those pallid lips,
So sweet, even in their silence — on those eyes,
That image sleep in death — upon that form,
Yet safe from the worms’ outrage, let no tear
Be shed, — not even in thought.”

ALASTOR.

“ Virtuous men pass mildly away,
And whisper to their souls to go :
While some of their sad friends do say,
The breath goes now ; and some say, no !”

DONNE.

WE think it right, in order to clear the way, for the more important, and, perhaps, more interesting scene which presently will begin to open, to elucidate, forthwith, one or two points in the last chapter, which, lying, as it were, out of our direct path, we were diverted from noticing, at the time, by the rapid and straight-forward tenor of our narrative. Having, however, helped our principal actor off the stage, *via* the window, we find we have breath and leisure to look about us, and are quite ready to resolve any difficulty, to the satisfaction of the fair reader. You take us at our word, you say. Much obliged, my dear young lady ; be pleased to mention what explanation you require, and we will set about giving it accordingly.

The Reader. — Imprimis, then, Mr. S. (excuse my

familiarity), may I ask, by whose agency the jewelled spear came to be removed away so opportunely, from where it was slung, over the chimney-piece ? — *Answer.* By that of Veronica, who, having overheard the disguised homicide signify his intention of using it, in the deed he meditated, hit upon that mode of frustrating his designs. Impelled, by that fearless decision, we love to recognise in her character, after hurriedly slipping on some light body-dress, she stole, on tiptoe, with a beating heart, and a cheek, pale at her own purpose, into the *salle-à-manger*, and carried the sword thence, into her own chamber.

The Reader. — Prodigious ! a fine child of her years, truly ! — and this occurred in the dark ? Did she jump at it, or pray did the weapon, like an autumnal fruit, drop into her lap of its own volition ? — *Answer.* My fair critic is pleased to be facetious ; but the sword, in question, bore no resemblance to those spears of Mars,* cited by *Julius Obsequens* ; and, besides, Veronica did not work in the dark. She luckily remembered observing, in the room, where, on the preceding evening, the several members of the household had congregated, more than one lamp on a side-table. This room happened to branch off from the gallery, midway between her own chamber, and the refectory. Thither, in the first instance, with light and quick steps, she necessarily repaired. As a feeble blaze yet glimmered, in the hearth, she found no difficulty in obtaining a light, which, of course, facilitated her subsequent operations.

Now, we are ready to acknowledge, that the sword came into her possession, by a sadly common-place process, although we are in our fair critic's judgment, whether it was not one, which, under the circumstances, was perfectly natural. She raised herself within reach of the weapon, by mounting a table.

* “ *Hastæ Martis in regia suâ sponte motæ.*”

The Reader.—Quite an exploit!—and I suppose we are to ascribe, to the same officious little lady, the purloining of the other sword?—*Answer.*

The conjecture does credit to your discernment, madam: she had not returned to her room, above a minute, ere the stranger quitted her father. We need scarcely remark on the state of exaltation, to which the mind of Veronica was wrought. She had been governed by an almost preternatural impulse, in venturing on the bold feat, she had just accomplished, and the excitation of her spirits, which bore her successfully, through so arduous an adventure, had not yet subsided.

The reader may object, perhaps, the incompatibility of the incident, we have recorded, with the fewness of the years of Veronica. With the pride, which custom authorizes, and which originally takes its rise from his physical superiority, although that be often the only advantage he can claim, the adult looks down, from his fancied height, on the inexperience of the child, and is apt to believe his nature too unripe, to put forth those mental resources, in moments of extremity, which even manhood, not seldom, fails to exhibit. How far this presumption of juvenile incapacity may have a certain coincidence with the fact, from its tendency, like prophecy, to lend a helping hand to its own fulfilment, we are not prepared to say; but we know, that examples occasionally occur, at that immature period, of the simultaneous conception, and execution, of extraordinary deeds, depending, for their fortunate issue, on the native energy, and courage of the actor, which would not discredit the sustained and habitual character of riper years.

Veronica, with shame and agony, apprehended, that her father had been deluded, by the sophistry of the unknown. She shuddered at the thought, even as his better angel, in such a straight, might be supposed to tremble for his soul. She was not aware, that, in ignorance of the translocation, which had taken place, his

dreadful purpose would lead him into the bed-chamber, she then occupied. *Whom* he meant to assassinate, she could not guess, nor, indeed, could her mind easily admit the possibility of such a crime; but her good genius, stimulated by filial love, and fertile in expedients, as it first prompted her to frustrate the villainy of the ruffian, so it afterwards inspired her, with like resolution, to disarm her father. Having witnessed the unconscious movement, with which Vicchy tossed the weapon upon the bed, she took advantage of his abstraction, to stealthily trip along the floor of the room, and steal away the instrument. Then she awaited the event, in a state of wretchedness, which only those can conceive, who, like her, have had to weep over the frailty of a parent. What was her consternation, when she found Hubert pass, from the adjacent chamber, into hers! The child could not conjecture his object; she stood, speechless with affright, racked, by the double agony of terror and suspense. But, when she gleaned from his words, that, far from meditating evil, her father had come, in fact, with the view to warn Sir Sigismund of his danger, the sudden conviction struck her, that she had all along misapprehended his purpose. The ecstatic joy of which idea, caused that revulsion of spirits, the effect of which we have elsewhere described.

Have you, my fair critic, any further inquiry to put?

The Reader.—Oh, a dozen. Pray, how happened “the great unknown” to blunder so egregiously as to kill one man for another? Was it not the villain’s design solely to compass the death of Pereny? I admit, his homicidal nature might discover, in the reward offered, a sufficient temptation to commit that crime, and, perhaps, (such a microscopic eye is villainy cursed with,) he might descry some justification, in the alleged treason of his victim. But why make a merit with Satan, by slaying Count Rodna? What “stoned his heart,” that he should “do a murder,” when he merely intended “a sacrifice?”—

Author. My dear young lady, you are really excruciating ; you do run on so. If you will only allow us to edge in a syllable, we believe we can clear up this point to your satisfaction. The unknown, in the course of his inquiries respecting the topography of the chateau, had ascertained, amongst other particulars, that the graf Pereny was in the habit of spending the greater part of the night in the private chapel, which was appended to the mansion. One portal of this consecrated building was fantastically carved and heavy, and, withal, so dilapidated by time, and overgrown with speckled lichen, that it might not wholly close, though continually flapping, in the wind, against its frame. This entrance, from the internal quadrangle, was indiscriminately used by the whole household. Happening to pass, on the previous night, the stranger had remarked a man, kneeling before an opposite shrine, and hence, he concluded, with too great precipitance, that this individual could be no other, than his destined victim.

The body of the chapel was usually appropriated to the religious worship of the *οι πολλοι* ; thence, a few stairs led into a narrow, small oratory, sanctified by containing a painting of the Virgin, reported to possess sundry miraculous properties. Here a private door opened into the interior of the mansion, and directly communicated with the gallery. It was through this door, that Vicchy (as he and Donald traversed the lobby) beheld Pereny in the act of genuflection, before the shrine of Our Lady. The unknown, having armed himself with Vicchy's sword, cautiously crossed the narrow court, and glided into the chapel, through the open door. As if he trod upon trembling ice, he measured the trifling distance, from the entrance of the oratory to the holy crypt, where the pious votary, with riveted eye, and abased mien, seemed embodied with the flag-pavement, on which he knelt. The light of one long waxen taper, which twinkled before the crucifix, struggled through the misty atmosphere of the

chapel, and shed a faint, yet direct gleam, on the bent head of the crouching worshipper. Owing to that deep posture of humiliation, it was impossible to distinguish his form and features; but, acting on his previous misconception, the wily ruffian shortly stood right over the solitary suppliant.

“ Hold !” thundered a single voice in his ear. It came, alas! too late. Count Rodna, in the same instant, fell, pierced to the heart, and, in the next, the sword of Donald was struck from his palsied hand. At that moment, Pereny rushed from the gallery, and the retainers of the mansion crowded into the chapel, by the way, which had given admittance to the assassin.

In consequence of the mysterious intimation of the phantom, Count Rodna had directed his household, to hold themselves under arms during the night; and Donald, who had been the bearer of his master’s orders, directly afterwards, (owing to a private misgiving, which, however indefinite, he thought he had cause to entertain,) set himself to watch the chamber-door of Hubert. It was closed, and he knew not the room was empty. He had not lain long perdu, ere, to his surprise, he beheld the unknown enter the apartment, and presently after, observed him issue forth, armed with a naked sword. With vague apprehensions floating on his mind, Donald followed the steps of the villain, as closely as his age and infirmities permitted; but came up too tardily to prevent a catastrophe, which he could not have foreboded. His exclamations drew many of the household into the chapel, with drawn rapiers, and looks of vengeance.

“ Oh ! my dear, dear master,” murmured the dying seneschal — then upbraidingly fixing his eyes on the truculent assassin, he proceeded, in feebler accents — “ Murderer ! you have slain the —.”

What Donald would further have spoken “ stuck in

his throat," and the next minute he gave up his soul to his Creator.

Meantime, the assassin encountered the attacks of the multitude with his natural bravery: more than one of his foes fell beneath his rapid strokes, whilst several were maimed for life; and it became doubtful, at one time, how the contest would terminate; when, suddenly, the sword of Vicchy snapped at the hilt, and although the unknown, with only his long dirk, kept his assailants at bay for a short period, he soon after offered to surrender. The rest we have already told. Q. E. D.

I see the gentle reader is prepared with another difficulty. Let her, in as few words as may accord with the privilege of her eloquent sex, start it, and we will set about working the problem, without that minuteness of detail, which were incompatible with the subordinate place, which should belong to this episode, in the general design of our history.

The Reader. — You are too polite by half, sir. Whither, then, did the "great unknown" lead Vicchy, when the two set forth on their ramble, "in thunder, lightning, and in rain?"

Author. — Hearken, my dear. The pair soon lost sight of the chateau: Vicchy exerted himself to keep up with the swift, and steady pace of his terrible conductor, almost mechanically; whilst, breaking his path, through bush and bramble, the villain led the way, in a zig-zag and involved course, as if rather with the view of bewildering his belated follower, amidst the intricacies of the forest, than pursuing any certain direction. After walking, with extreme haste, for the space of an hour, the unknown, suddenly, struck out of the woody depths, into a very rugged, narrow footway, hemmed in between two consistencies of mud and hedge, which bore all the character of a steep, dirty lane, or rather gully. This brought them, at length, before a natural insulated projection of rock, or stratified schist, impending in sharp

ridges, some few feet over the surface of a large dell, and crowned by the frail flowers of the white saxifrage. Within, was excavated a vast cavern, whose entrance, in other respects hardly accessible, was, besides, effectually screened from all chance-discovery, by the thicknesses of myrtle, bramble, and dog-rose, which, springing from the light stratum between the shelving of the rock, clustered around, and there gave out their odours. These, it seemed, being held in on one side, indicated two or three narrow, and precarious steps of mica slate, which descended through the jaws of the cave. It was necessary to use a creeping posture, in order to find ingress, and Vicchy, as he followed his leader through the complicated foliage, and backed into the passage, though a brave man, had some secret misgivings, which he would willingly have hidden from himself, if the increased throbbing of his heart had let him. Stifling, however, his apprehensions, by an exertion which he deemed intrepidity, though it was nothing but winking cowardice, he continued to descend, when, after a few yards, the width of the gulf suddenly expanding, he was able to assume an erect posture, and found himself standing in a roomy cavern, the dimensions of which were lost, in customary darkness. The veins of quartz, apparently imbedded around, assumed, for a few paces, an almost argentine character, owing to the red day-light glow, which, like a fire of naphtha, at first, irradiated the mouth of the cavern, though it rapidly faded into the Cimmerian gloom, that wrapt the boundaries of the interior. Hubert found the atmosphere neither so confined nor chill, as might have been expected ; the free, and wholesome air having vent, through some natural spiracles in the rock. To such dark and dreary solitude, and shelter, as this place afforded, his associate, having first promised, that he would speedily be back, without further apology, left Vicchy. The ruffian turned an angle at one extremity of the subterraneous chamber, where, directly beyond a

lamellated mass of rock, there was a narrow outlet, opening, probably, into the more profound recesses of the natural mansion. Vicchy seated himself on a large stone, at some distance from the entrance, and in no enviable frame of mind, awaited the issue of this strange adventure. But, whatever were his meditations, he was not suffered to brood over them long. They were interrupted, by the apparition of a tall shape, darkening the mouth of the chasm, whose outline, although strongly defined in the light, was all that the deep obscurity within would allow him to distinguish. Vicchy did not stir, and, presently, the form glided away, and was lost in the receding umbrage of the vault.

With that sort of desperate courage, which is not unallied to fear, Vicchy instantly rose, and proceeded forwards, with his arms outstretched, in the direction, which the feeble echo of receding footsteps pointed out. In this manner, trusting, solely, to the sense of hearing, Vicchy explored several paces, when, suddenly, his extended waist was clipped, with a powerful pressure, by cold clammy fingers, and a voice, singularly hollow and sepulchral, whispered in his ear, "This is your way; make no resistance, but come with me." With the unstable feeling of one in a dream, Hubert was led along several winding passages, in the midst of darkness, so substantial, that, in the emphatic phrase of scripture, it might be said to be "felt." All at once, a dim ray of light glimmered through a narrow slit or loop-hole, in the ruinous sides of the cavern, and here they stopped short. At that moment, he heard, near him, the tremulous moan of one in prayer or agony. Having cautiously removed, with its lank fingers, a piece of earth, loosely inserted in a fissure of the rock, the dubious figure, in a low mysterious voice, directed Hubert to gaze in at the crevice; he obeyed, and beheld a small chamber, somewhat irregular in shape, and duskily lighted. It was rude and desolate, and afforded small appearance of ac-

commodation. The walls were hewn out of the same testaceous strata, which distinguished the entire cave, and, like the ceiling, were thickly coated, with the stifling smoke of centuries, which, after circling through the apartment, was wont to escape, with difficulty, through some fissure, or disruption of the roof. In a further corner, was a dull charcoal fire, whose fluttering flame painted the earthy walls, with intermitting hues, and diffused around, the wierdlike gloom of glowing embers. A few chairs, a table, and a wooden bench, lay about “in admired disorder.”

On one side, stood a miserable pallet, over and about which, a tattered coverlet hung, by way of curtain,—but what pale blighted form lies stretched within that wretched couch? her blue eyes turned upwards, and a single auburn ringlet on her shoulder. On whose ashy countenance, even now convulsed with the last mortal agony, does the low flame throw its wavering light? It is that of a woman, still young—and once how beautiful! whom Vicchy well remembered to have seen in other days, and under happier auspices. And that other, —— he, who, seated on a chair by the bedside, leans, anxiously, but with face averted, and posture fixed, as in mockery of monumental stone, over the form of the shrieved penitent,—athwart, what brow is thrown that dark habit? What is he, who, uplifting a leaden cross, is even now hearkening to the last faint words of her, whose soul he had just “cleansed of that perilous stuff, which weighs upon the heart?”

“ And still the crucifix on high
He holds before the darkening eye,
And still he bends an anxious ear,
The faltering penitence to hear.”*

In his hand, may be noticed a bundle of papers, and ever, as the low, deep-drawn sighs, which precede dissolution,

* The Lay of the Last Minstrel.

pierce his ear, the vehement and convulsive play of his fingers on the roll, seem to evince his sympathy, with the dying sufferer.

Father, said the female, in feeble and broken accents, “ Let me implore you, by that salvation you pledged, to remember your promise, that those papers be not opened during the reign of the regent Martinuzzi. They evidence the tragic story of my confession, and detail, how I became an accomplice in that crime, of which, through the blood of Jesus, I stand this hour assoiled.”

The obscure figure beside him, at that moment, plucked Vicchy by his mantle, as if to request his attention, and then lifted up its voice.

“ Eissenburg,” she whispered, but in tones so low and unearthly, that they added to the solemnity of her speech, in the darkness of that vault,—“ Eissenberg, I bid thee now bear witness, she has said it,—that packet holds the destinies of Hungary. One day, I may have to command you to declare, before the world, the particulars of the death-bed of ——: that woman—listen ! she speaks again.”—“ One thing more I’d fain mention, before the world roll utterly away from my affections,” resumed the gasping female; but her speech was so interrupted, with the hard sobs of mortal strife, that it was with difficulty Vicchy could catch its purport. “ Once,” she proceeded, “ in my sore agony,—it was in my madness,—I cursed that man. Him—the cause of all—my fatal fall, my anguish, and of this mighty crime, charactered in that paper, and which, erewhiles, I spake of.”

“ But thou recallest thy malison,” cried the ghostly confessor, with strong inward emotion, bending closer over the low couch of the wrestling soul.

“ Recall it, father ! ” faltered out the female, raising herself for an instant, with expiring strength ; “ recall

it! Oh! would to God, that he were there, where thou sittest, that he might know, and receive the last aspiration of my living voice!"

The head of the monk was still depressed;—with trembling hand, whilst every fibre of his frame seemed convulsed, he raised his cowl, and gave one look, and uttered one little word, but in so choked and indrawn an accent, that Hubert could not hear it. A languid colour reddened the female's cheek, she faintly screamed, and, through the darkening film of death, her sunken eye sought out the face of him, who sustained, and bent, scarce breathing, over her.

As, sometimes, for an instant, the last rim of the horizontal luminary will gild, with burnished radiance, the parting clouds, ere they finally reclose to cover him with their pall; like such transient sunburst, flashed the light of recognition across that dying female's brow. Striving to draw her last convulsive breaths, and concentrating all her strength, in a final effort, she threw her arms around the confessor's neck,

“—— the breath,
Revisited those lips, and life's pale light,
Flashed through those limbs.” *

“ Not—not deserted! in death, mine own! God bless thee! mine in heaven!” she ceased, and, softly sighing, pillow'd her head on his shoulder.

Was she no more? The monk gazed madly:—“ Dear Alicia,” he murmured, “ can it be?”

Her eye grew dim: it fixed, it closed; but her lip yet inaudibly quivers. Alas! the bland and beautiful expression was but the sign of a devotedness, that could not die;—the triumph, the victory of that love, which

* Adonais.

makes the soul of woman, over the body's dissolution. The monk gave one deep groan, loosed himself from the locked embrace of the yet warm corpse, and, clasping his hands convulsively above his head, fell back, in a kind of trance, upon the motionless pillow.

Oh, thou disturbing spirit of love! that art painted a child, and yet we borrow from thee all our strength; thou art feigned blind, and yet our best sight is derived from thy inspiration! Were we wise, methinks, the terrors of thy archery should strike our nerves, not less than thunder: thou brewest a nectar, whose exquisite taste maketh humanity divine, and then dashest poison into the Nepenthe;

“To ope new veins of torture in the soul,
And wake the nerve where agony is born.”*

Thou, indeed, knowest the marvellous of pain; but, though thy ways are ways of trouble, and despair, what were this world, without thy witcheries?

Vicchy's attention was so fully occupied, with the scene we have attempted to describe, that the being who stood by his side, had occasion, more than once, to pluck him by the sleeve, ere he recollect ed himself, and called to mind where he was, and how he came thither. He was then conducted into another cell; for, it appeared, that this subterranean cavity had been subdivided, either naturally or artificially, to answer the purposes of many apartments. Here, his companion, stopping short, suddenly addressed him:—

“Do you remember me, sir Herezeg?”†

“How should I?” returned Vicchy; “I can see nothing.”

“Ha!” replied the figure, “I forgot myself. From this vacant dome, where flames the topaz, and the fre-

* Young.

† Herezeg,—duke.

quent sapphire beams forth serene, like angel eyes; where glow the empurpled amethyst, beryls almost cerulean, and jasper, bright as the spear-grass, near the ebbing wave; gems, yet virgin of the sun, and such as rarely chance to deck the pomp of courts, emit their restless splendour in eclipse. This dim twilight, which, by long practice, gives me to behold, with distinctness, each opening of the cave, or shelving rock, spangled with pearls of dew, and every choicest stone, or sparkling fossil, that veins its walls, but never stole a charm of light, or colour, from the day, is, to thy eyes, blind vacancy. Those perpetual hues of spar and crystal, that, couched in the vaulted roof,* rival the glorious stars, are quenched, to thee, in darkness:— rest thee a while; I will return.”

The figure moved away; but, ere the lapse of a minute, reappeared, bearing a small dark lantern, the dull and feeble ray of whose light, falling in a direct stream upon the wild dress and withered features of the bearer, illuminated them, at the same time that comparative darkness continued to brood over all, beyond the immediate spot, in which they stood.

“Have you, I repeat, any recollection of where, and when, you encountered her, who now addresses you?” demanded the fearful shape, at the same time raising the lamp to within a small distance of her face, and then slowly lowering it, so as to enable Vicchy to have a perfect view of her tall, gaunt form, and shrivelled, writhen features. Her lineaments were wild and haggard; her complexion, discoloured by an unnatural paleness, was of the consistency of parchment; her eyes were red, and bloodshot; her long, elfin locks, were tangled over her shoulders, and their ends were tinged of a reddish hue, with cna; her hands and feet were of the same

* A rich specimen of Transylvanian ore may be seen in the British Museum.

colour.* She was wrapped in a mantle of woollen cloth, which partly concealed the peculiarities of a costume, which, in other respects, had something in it of an Asiatic character. In short, her whole attire and manner spoke her for a Cygani.

Vicchy, at the first glance, recognised the person, with whom he was now confronted, for that mysterious woman, whose remembrance was accompanied by gratitude for lives rescued, and was associated, besides, with the announcement of a prophecy, to which his heart still clung, with fond credulity.

"The forest of Belivar,"† began Vicchy, in a low voice.

"Enough," interposed the other, whom we may as well designate, by her usual appellation of Unna;— "enough, and thou rememberest, what was the lot portioned out unto thy child?" And she proceeded to repeat, word for word, her former prediction of high estate, to Veronica. "But," she added, imperiously, "the boy, Sigismund, now an inmate in the house of Count Rodna, seems fated, to stand between thy issue and a crown. Thou lovest thy offspring, and thou dost not want ambition. Eissenburg, if he live, I tell you, that stripling will hereafter ascend a throne, in bar of the heir of Walstein; but 'tis chartered, in the bright tracery of the star; the hand of fate hath inscribed, with adamantine pen, on the brass-leaved tablet of TIME THAT HATH NOT YET BEEN, that a golden glory shall circle the head of Veronica, of Eissenburg. I have read it, and who shall gainsay what I predestine, darkling, through the gloom of the future? Only the death of Sigismund, can reconcile this contradiction. I have done,—thou art a father; thy destiny calls aloud on thee!—thou hast a dagger!

* We are indebted, for these minutiae, to Brown's Travels in Dacia, Styria, &c. London, 4to. 1688.

† Situated on the Draave.

this way,—not a syllable,—hush!”—and Unna reconducted him to that part of the vault, where he had first entered; and then, without another word, retired from his presence. She had scarcely been gone a minute, ere the mouth of the excavation became again darkened, and the unknown, who had accompanied Vicchy thither, made his re-appearance, hauling along with him, several packages, containing Hubert’s property. These consisted of various articles of clothing, which weighed all the heavier, on account of certain rolls of Hungarian ducats, with which they were interspersed.

“ You see, I am a man of my word,” said the daring bandit. Vicchy made no reply, and his companion, laying his hand on sundry weighty canvass bags, presently resumed:—“ Tis only this minute,” he said, “ I observed your *specie*. Do you count over the shiners, to satisfy yourself, they are all right; the beasts are comfortably lodged in a barn, not a furlong off. So now,” he shortly resumed, having drawn his companion near the entrance; “ if you will take my advice, you will leave these *pensas auri*, and moveables where they at present are, till night-time; hearken to what I shall unfold to you”—and, bending down, the villain gradually proceeded to open to his hearer, his horrible scheme of murder. Whilst throwing open his vestment, he offered the imperial proclamation, already mentioned, to the notice of Vicchy, and the better to illustrate and enforce his arguments, construed it aloud. He concluded, by pressing the Hungarian noble, with the most plausible inducements, his ingenuity suggested, to aid him in his diabolical enterprise. The speciousness of the lure was nicely adapted to the circumstances of the individual, and during more than an hour’s earnest discussion, one by one, all the intrenchments and bastions, which Vicchy’s better angel had set up for his defence, were either relinquished, or broken down, by his arch assaulter, until the dream of his greedy imagination became fully pos-

sessed of the devil,—that only devil, who, in our belief, ever yet whirled his headlong chariot wheels over the ruins of conscience, and of duty...SELF!"—

We need say no more on this head. Of the subsequent vacillancy, and ultimate conduct of the Hungarian noble, the reader (if he have not skipped) is already informed.—Q. E. D. Is our fair critic prepared with another difficulty?

The Reader.—My dear sir, I fear you are making these explanations of yours, as interminable as the autobiography of Tristram Shandy, whose history, proceeded, as it were, in simple arithmetical progression, whilst the subject matter of his life, was accumulating in a geometrical ratio. You are in the moon; and not having the winged griffin of the Italian poet, I cannot keep up with such extravagant flights.

Author.—My dear madam, let me entreat of you, not to talk so figuratively. Be pleased to speak in a more familiar way, and to the point.

The Reader, rousing herself from a musing posture.—I see your drift, sir; you would fain, like a true criminal, make a kind of *prolepsis* of me; but who, unless he were conscious of the weakness of his incidents, would attempt to anticipate the objections of his critics?

The Author.—We think it extremely unfair, your taking advantage of our politeness, in having admitted you behind the scenes, to insinuate such charges. We would thank you to say briefly, whether there remains any particular, which, in your opinion, requires to be cleared up? We pause for a reply.

The Reader.—Verily, Mr. S., there is appended to your last explanation, new matter, which I, in common with the rest of your readers, am curious to understand. Who, in the name of wonder, is she, whom you have introduced, and dismissed to her last account, almost in a breath—a page, I would say? The confessor, I presume, can be no other than our precious acquaintance, Father

Dominick; and the packet, I take it, must be *the* packet, of which we heard enough, in an earlier chapter,—manuscript, I would say.

Author. — We must really stand excused, if, on second thought, we decline any further anticipating the interest of our story.

The Reader. — As you please: the patience of your reader will not be severely tasked, by your choosing to omit the explanation; but what objection have you to tell us, who is Count Rodna? Who, Sir Sigismund?

Author. — “Je vous prie de m’excuser, ma curieuse.”

The Reader. — “Quousque tandem abutere patientia nostra?” — I have done with you, sir, for my part, and would recommend you to give over tampering with the better judgment of your readers. When ever did the hawk forego his natural prey, at the plaint of the nightingale? and think you, that critics will spare an author for his special pleading? *Risum teneatis amici!*

Author. — Say you so, my fair incognita? Then here, all necessary explanations being summed up, we leave any further development to take its appropriate place in the currency of the narrative.

MANUSCRIPT IX.

“ Oh, Poverty ! thou art indeed omnipotent ! thou grimest us into desperation, thou confoundest all our boasted, and most deep rooted principles !—thou fillest us to the very brim with malice and revenge, and renderest us capable of acts of unknown horror.”

CALEB WILLIAMS.

“ Serpens decepit me.”—*Genesis*, c. iii. ver. 13.

As we are not at present engaged in the biography of the Duke of Eissenburg, we have no desire, *à force d'ennuyer*, to illustrate the minuter shades of his character. The various incidents of his life, can only concern the reader, so far as they happen to fall within the general scope of our narrative, or may conduce to the interest, and unravelling of our story, in the ordonnance of which, the character of Vicchy, however, worthy of the best attention of the craniologist, should not be so prominent as to disturb “ a clear and united view,” as Lord Shaftesbury renders the *το ευσυνοπτον* of Aristotle. For which reason, we intend to advance, as it were, *per saltum*, and overleap the few years that intervened between the death of Count Rodna, and the opening of our tale,—a gap, by the bye, comprehending a period of time, in which the more unlucky of our readers might have undergone the full penalty of petty larceny in the Bay of Botany, and again be thriving at their “ dirty work,” in Broad-street,

St. Giles's ; yet, however, long the interval, it passes over as imperceptibly, as we have observed the pages of a dull novel, under the mechanical fingers of a jaded reader ; or, as do the orthodox twenty minutes of the reverend Dr. ——, commonly consumed, by the oblivious churchwarden, in the world of dreams.

Vicchy had been consigned to a gloomy chamber, destined for the domestic prison of the chateau. The sides were characteristically ornamented with heavy irons, and a massive chain went entirely round the walls, with the exception of the interval of the door, which was fabricated of iron, and lined with cloth, in order to deaden sound. This singular fitting up, and appropriation of an apartment in a private residence, significant of the disorganized condition of the country, at the era of our story, is still ordinary to Hungarian habitations. On the evening of the second day of his incarceration, the magnat was reclining on a low form, buried in anxious thought about his child's fate and his own ; when, Veronica, who had liberty of egress and regress, being at the time absent, the door of the massive walled room, in which he was immured, was heard to creak on its hinges, and the eyes of the prisoner were bent upon his gaoler, who, after ushering in a tall man, wrapt, from heel to helm, in a dark mantle, withdrew.

The visitor stationed himself, with his back to the small window, or rather loophole, through which the beams of the pale queen of night streamed into the chamber ; and looked intently, and silently, upon the captive, who had risen upon his entrance.

Hubert drew back, and gazed, in turn, on the shrouded figure. "Who art thou ?" he at length demanded.

"I speak to the Duke of Eissenburg, I presume ?" returned the stranger, after a minute's pause.

Vicchy started with surprise, "That voice !" he exclaimed,—"speak, tell me, do I address myself in this last extremity to ——"

"Pereny," added the other.

"Your name, my lord," he proceeded, "I fortunately ascertained from these papers, which it seems are your property,"—and the speaker placed several letters and memoranda, upon a deal table beside him. "I have likewise held a brief, but most interesting conversation, with an eloquent little advocate of yours. One, whose word can no more be doubted, than the oracles of Heaven. Did I need such proof of your innocence, your child would have convinced me, that you are falsely implicated in this horrible affair. She has explained, by what means you became companioned by that sanguinary myrmidon, to whom I owe the loss of an invaluable friend. She has satisfied me, that you did your utmost, the other night, to raise an alarm, which only your ignorance of the topography of the house, rendered abortive. But these proofs, which lead me so directly to the conclusion of your innocence, cannot, I fear, be forthcoming, without compromising your safety in other respects, and which should, no less, be evited."

Vicchy remained for a space, with downcast eyes, silent, and thoughtful. At length, he raised his head, and replied, "The graf Pereny must be well aware, that a word from him would rectify the wrong, that wrested law, and false witnesses have done my honour, in which case, there would no longer be an objection to my acknowledging my rank, before any tribunal in Hungary." There was a moment of musing, and painful pause.

Pereny shook his head—he appeared disconcerted, but quickly rallying, "My lord," he said abruptly, "give me leave to ask, have you not a brother?"

"I have," replied Hubert, with some surprise.

"Is there not a striking likeness between you both?" again demanded the other.

"I cannot say," replied Vicchy. "In his boyhood, my brother fled from home, and has never since been heard of. But what may be your motive for the inquiry?"

"It matters not," returned Pereny, — "let it suffice, I am as convinced of your guiltlessness, in the matter of your outlawry, as I am of your having been unjustly suspected, on the present occasion, although no fewer than half a dozen of my followers, have conspired to swear, and perhaps believe, that you led the band, which ravished from me, on my bridal day, the sister of the late king." He paused, and then proceeded, in a somewhat unsteady voice; "although I may not explain how such a coincidence of error hath arisen, yet, from circumstances, I need not further advert to; I know, for a moral certainty, that you could have had no hand whatsoever, in the fatal abduction of the princess; but I, like yourself, my lord, am the sport of a malignant destiny, and dare not show myself in the world's eye; my life is sought by my enemies, with an inveteracy of rancour, unexampled in the history of mankind. I must myself shun, by disguise and concealment, the renewed persecution of my foes. Thus circumstanced, however inclined, I have no means of saving you, in the manner you point out. Our longer conference would attract observation. All I can engage for, is, to connive at your escape, which I am willing to do, because your present predicament is chiefly to be attributed to your having been borne along, in the train of my misfortunes, and although I am not answerable for your involvement in my mysterious fate, I am no less desirous, if possible, to save you harmless. It only remains for me to take my leave. Good night—my lord." Closing the conference, by this abrupt transition, the Count Pereny suddenly retired from the apartment.

To pursue the circumstances of Vicchy's life, at this period, with any minuteness, is, beside our present purpose; let it suffice, that, by the friendly assistance of Pereny, (of whom, in the sequel, we shall, perhaps, have occasion to say more,) the unhappy noble, and his daughter, succeeded in effecting their escape. After various chances and dangers, they, at length, arrived

in the capital of Austria, there to await the gradual encroachments of starvation, amid the horrors, and petty humiliations of that debasing want, which, perhaps, after all, is the subtlest, the most fatal, and immitigable antagonist, with which virtue has to contend, the sorest trial, allotted to man, in this flinty, and cold-hearted world. Indeed, if the shrinking delicacies of feminine innocence, be taken into account, the miseries implied, in a fall from opulence, make the saddest aspect, to our thinking, in which sad humanity can be contemplated. The rags, and corporeal sufferings, nay, the contumelies, and base subjections, incident to extreme poverty, sink to nothing, in comparison, with its revolting, and nearly inevitable companionship, with ignorance and vice ; — 'tis the loathsome miasm, infecting the haunts of vulgar depravity — the breathing in of which impure airs, constitutes the cruel, and constant necessity of the lower classes — that clothes the idea of utter indigence, in its direct horrors ; 'tis what must blast the eyes to look on ; 'tis what harrows up the ears to listen to ; 'tis what one sense or other must be condemned to writhe beneath, throughout the garish day, and the sleepless night, whose horrid apprehension must curdle up the inmost soul of sensibility. Feeling thus, we hardly go along with the first of England's living poets,* when he quits his lakes, to beautify, with his refined humanities, the ordinary dwelling-places of our metropolis :

“ ‘Tis distance lends enchantment to the view.” †

Only let the bard

“ Through utter and thro’ middle darkness borne,” ‡

locate himself near St. Giles’s “ stygian pool,” to be

“ Long detained in that obscure sojourn,” §

* Wordsworth.

† Campbell.

‡ Milton.

§ Milton.

and thenceforth, “with other notes,” he would sing of the hazy atmosphere of London. Nor, for the same reason, can we sympathize, with certain passages of an English Opium Eater’s interesting confessions. That the divine drug, he affected, might add a keener relish to Grassini’s strains, we can understand; that it might tend to enhance *les delicatesses* of Platonic love-making, we admit, though, according to the Encyclopædia Britannica, its virtues would seem rather calculated to heighten a more substantial gratification; but, that its influence should ever drive a scholar and a gentleman “to all the markets, to which the poor resort, on a Saturday night, for laying out their wages,”* is, what appears to us, not less antipathous to the due operation of opium, than would be a dose of citric acid; and, were it not on record, we should have conceived it impossible, that such an effect could ever have sprung from such a cause.

Should the reader be sceptical, in respect to poverty’s involving tortures, more exquisite than “the rack, the cord, the bowl,” only let him, if he dare, “expose” himself, in bare imagination, “to feel what wretches feel.” Let him subject his own innocent relative, whose education, heretofore, may have wound refinement, even to fastidiousness, and purity, the most sensitive, into her fair form, to the disgusting familiarities (disgusting, however well meant) of coarse, and hardened natures. Let him, in idea, plunge, with this sweet and shrinking plant, amid the central gloom, and leprosies of London’s brothel-courts, and then — but we forbear. There are prospects from which the mind turns away, with instinctive, and invincible antipathy.

To return to Vicchy, whose final probation was not long in arriving. Why should we insist upon the aggravations of such a lot, and harrow up the feelings of our readers, by particularizing low carking cares, distresses,

* English Opium Eater.

and horrors, which have in them something prostrating to our common humanity? We would merely give the reader to understand, that, for twelve months, no contemptible segment of human life, the father and child, had to endure every species of destitution, implied, in that significant, and dreadful phrase, abject, absolute penury.

One bleak, winter's night, Vicchy, without knowing whither he should betake himself, sallied from his wretched hovel, in a state of mind, which very desperation rendered accessible to imaginings of unknown, and direful horrors. What a thought for a parent!—the young life of his beloved Veronica, was about to yield its last sand, through very inanition! Hell grew, and darkened on his soul. It was midnight, and wildered with bad and agonizing suggestions, the *malesuada fames*,* after sauntering from street to street, he found himself at the end of the Landstracht, near one of the bridges, which crossed the Vienne. Here, ensconcing himself within the deep shadow, cast from a jutting wall, he took his station. The spot was lone and unfrequented. He had not, however, stood there above a few seconds, and had began already to waver in his purpose, when his ears caught the sound of trampling hoofs. He is on the alert; and, as the equestrian neared him, Vicchy sprung forward. He seizes the reins, and, presenting his pistol to the horseman's face, in a peremptory tone, demands his money. Had the figure addressed been stone, it could not have regarded this, so startling an action, with greater apparent indifference. Slowly the horseman turned his head, and, with admirable presence of mind, struck up the muzzle, with his arm, and wrenched the weapon, out of the grasp of the highwayman. Then, dismounting, he grappled with him, and pinioned him to the earth.

" Strike, if thou wilt, and welcome," said the wretched

* *Malesuada*.—Who but Virgil would have hit on so felicitous an epithet to Famine?

man ; “ but, oh ! as thou art a knight, and hope for eternal salvation, save the life of a sinless child, now perishing for want, in yonder city !”

“ Arise, Eissenburg !” exclaimed the other — “ I only meant to show you the peril in which you stood. Ere next you level that pistol, seek out your foes — I am none. Here, man, is my purse,” and the knight handed him a leathern bag, with a weight of gold pieces in it. “ There, ‘tis the gift of a friend. Wilt thou meet me on this spot to-morrow at early twilight ? I think I can show you a way, by which you may have that purse replenished, whenever it jingles less merrily. No thanks — you are heartily welcome.”

Vicchy gazed on the very juvenile appearance of the gallant cavalier, with a mingled feeling of doubt, admiration, and terror. By what inspiration could he have learned his title ? Whence arose that extraordinary strength, which belied his youthful aspect ? And, to what Christian source, could he attribute that uncommon generosity, which, not content with pardoning the man, who levelled a pistol at his head, gave into the ruffian’s hand, a heavy purse, and hinted at a treasury, from whence, when it grew lighter, he might replenish it ? The voice sounded familiar to him ; — but the appearance was that of a stranger. He remained in speechless astonishment, while his liberal benefactor was caressing his noble Arabian, ere he vaulted into his seat. Then he beheld him, after displaying unusual grace, and dexterity of horsemanship, gallop from the spot. The next minute, that bridge was, once more, as still and quiet as midnight, and deep solitude, could render it.

Vicchy stood, for a moment, entranced in thought ; had he been dreaming ? — or, was the being indeed an angel, and, were those broad gold coins, he clanked against each other, an angel’s gift ? Alas, no, wretched man ! Why, at that most awful, and portentous crisis, did not your heart rather whisper to you, that you had

seen an apostate spirit incarnate; and that that purse, you dangled in your hand, was an earnest of an unutterable barter, about to be established, betwixt the great tempter and yourself? With audible thankfulness, to his sainted namesake, for having spared him the perpetration of a fearful crime, and congratulating himself, besides, on his escape out of such imminent risk, with life, Vicchy retraced his steps homeward.

The mortal hours of Veronica, had been, certainly, numbered, on that night, only for the relief her father brought her.

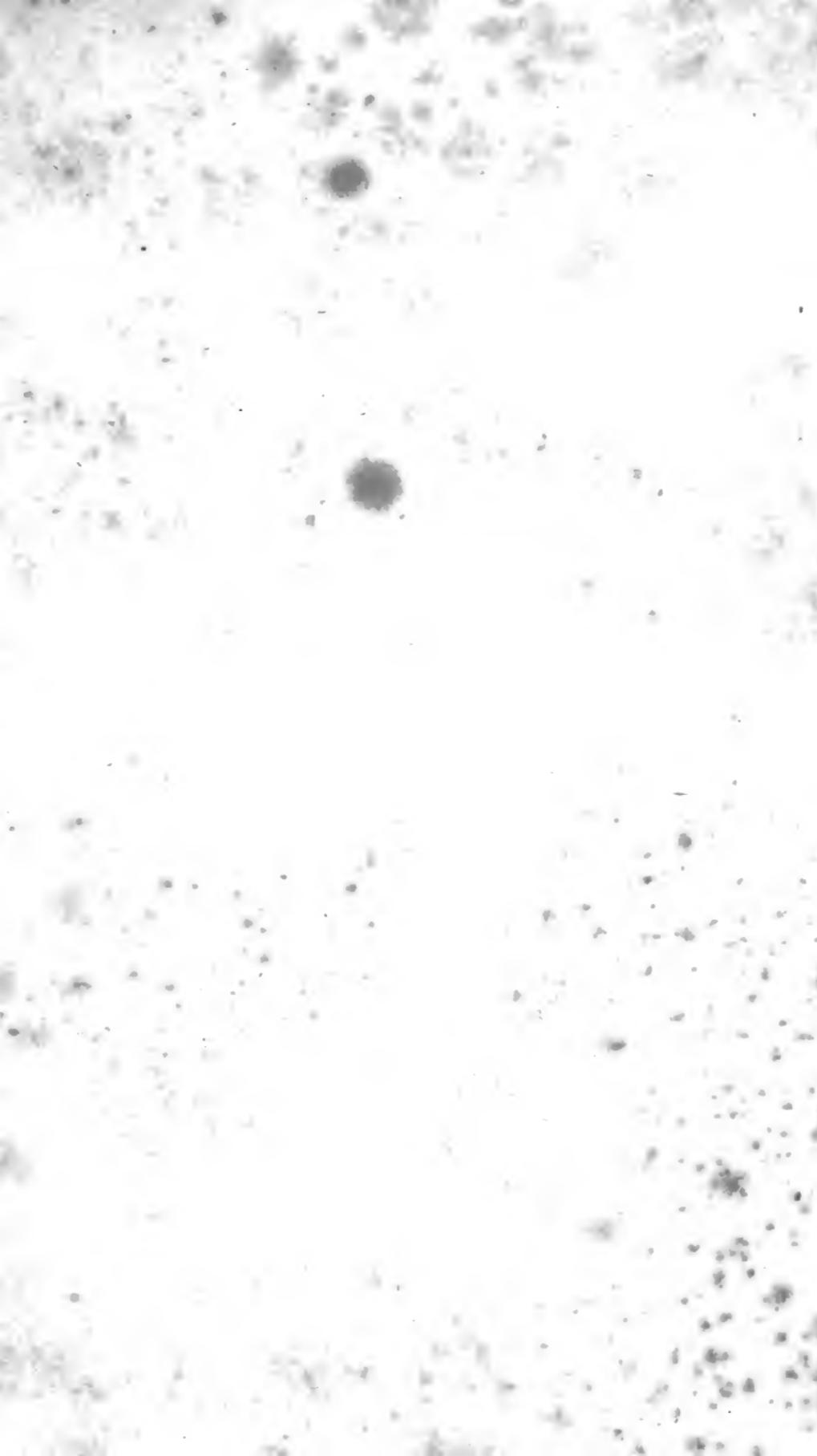
On the next evening, towards dusk, the two men again met, at the foot of the same bridge, when the fatal compact was entered into, which set the last seal upon the doom of the Duke of Eissenburg, who, from that hour, became the thrall of the bandit Ragotzy. Through the interest of Father Dominick, exerted at the request of the Cygani leader, Vicchy was appointed to a command in the national troop; although it was only a short time before the opening of our story, that he came to take up his abode in Hermanstadt.

From the above epoch, crime, danger, and deceit hovered about the path of that fallen magnat, like flitting fiends. Treacherous, as a defender of his country, he sunk to compromise her interests, at the command of the Cygani leader. False to the oaths, by which Ragotzy believed him bound, he betrayed, for lucre, the movements of the brigand to the Richter Iwan. Sold to all, and faithful to none;—it is enough to say, that such was the character of the outlawed constable of Hungary, at the period, when he joined the sentinel on the rampart, as narrated in the first manuscript of our veritable history.

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